11.25.05.

From the Library of
Professor Samuel Miller
in Memory of
Judge Samuel Miller Breckinridge
Presented by
Samuel Miller Breckinridge Long
to the Library of
Princeton Theological Seminary

SCB
1090

MEMOIRS

OF THE LATE

Rev. SAMUEL PEARCE, A. M.

MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL

in

BIRMINGHAM;

WITH

EXTRACTS

FROM SOME OF HIS MOST INTERESTING

LETTERS.

COMPILED BY

ANDREW FULLER, D. D.

Author of "The Calvinistic and Socinian Systems compared, as to their moral tendency," and "The Gospel its own Witness."

Oh Jonathan, thou wast slain upon thy high places. I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan! DAVID.

BOSTON:

Printed by and for MANNING & LORING, No. 2, Cornhill.

AUGUST, 1801.

MEMOIRS

OF THE LATE

Rev. SAMUEL PEARCE, A. M.

Minister of the Gospel in Birmingham.

TO WHICH ARE ANNEXED,

THREE

OCCASIONAL SERMONS.

By ANDREW FULLER, *D. D.*

TO THE

FAMILY AND FRIENDS

OF

MR. PEARCE,

THESE MEMOIRS,

COMPILED WITH THEIR APPROBATION

AND FROM A TENDER REGARD TO HIS MEMORY,

ARE AFFECTIONATELY

AND RESPECTFULLY

INSCRIBED BY

THE COMPILER.

CONTENTS.

INTRODUCTION 7

CHAP. I.

His parentage, converſion, call to the miniſtry, and ſettlement at Birmingham 9

CHAP. II.

His laborious exertions in promoting miſſions to the heathen, and offering himſelf to become a miſſionary 29

CHAP. III.

His religious exerciſes and labours, from the time of his relinquiſhing the idea of going abroad, to the commencement of his laſt illneſs 60

CHAP. IV.

An account of his laſt affliction, and the holy and happy exerciſes of his mind under it 103

CHAP. V.

General outlines of his character, illuſtrated by examples 141

Concluding Reflections 175
Rev. Mr. Brewer's Oration 185
Dr. Ryland's Sermon 195

INTRODUCTION.

IT was observed by this excellent man, during his last affliction, that he never till then gained any personal instruction from our Lord's telling Peter by *what death* he should glorify God. To die by a consumption, had used to be an object of dread to him: But, "Oh my Lord," said he, "if by *this death* I can most GLORIFY THEE, I prefer it to all others." The lingering death of the cross, by which our Saviour himself expired, afforded him an opportunity of uttering some of the most affecting sentences which are left on sacred record: And to the lingering death of this his honoured servant, we are indebted for a considerable part of the materials which appear in these Memoirs. Had he been taken away suddenly, there had been no opportunity for him to have expressed his sentiments and feelings in the manner he has now done in letters to his friends. While in health, his hands were full of labour, and consequently his letters were written mostly upon the spur of occasion; and related principally to business, or to things which would be less interesting to Christians in general.

It

It is true, even in them it was his manner to drop a few sentiments, towards the close, of an experimental kind; and many of these hints will be interspersed in this brief account of him: But it was during his affliction, when, being laid aside nearly a year, and obliged to desist from all public concerns, that he gave scope to the feelings of his heart. Here, standing as on an eminence, he reviewed his life, re-examined the ground of his hope, and anticipated the crown which awaited him, with a joy truly *unspeakable and full of glory.*

Like Elijah, he has left the *chariot of Israel*, and ascended as in a *chariot of fire;* but not without having first communicated of his eminently Christian spirit. Oh that a double portion of it may rest upon us!

MEMOIRS

OF THE LATE

Mr. SAMUEL PEARCE.

CHAP. I.

HIS PARENTAGE, CONVERSION, CALL TO THE MINISTRY, AND SETTLEMENT AT BIRMINGHAM.

MR. SAMUEL PEARCE was born at Plymouth on July 20th, 1766. His father, who survives him, is a respectable silversmith, and has been many years a deacon of the Baptist church in that place.

When a child, he lived with his grandfather, who was very fond of him, and endeavoured to impress his mind with the principles of religion. At about eight or nine years of age he came home to his father with a view of learning his business. As he advanced in life, his evil propensities, as he has said, began to ripen; and forming connexions with several vicious school-fellows, he became more and more corrupted. So greatly was his heart at this time set in him to do evil, that had it not been for the restraining goodness of God, which somehow, he knew not how, preserved him in most instances from carrying his wicked inclinations into practice, he supposed he should have been utterly ruined.

At times he was under strong convictions, which rendered him miserable; but at other times they subsided; and then he would return with eagerness to his sinful pursuits. When about fifteen years old he was sent by

his father to inquire after the welfare of a perſon in the neighbourhood, in dying circumſtances, who (though before his departure he was in a happy ſtate of mind, yet) at that time was ſinking into deep deſpair. While in the room of the dying man, he heard him cry out with inexpreſſible agony of ſpirit, "I am damned forever!" Theſe awful words pierced his ſoul; and he felt a reſolution at the time to ſerve the Lord: but the impreſſion ſoon wore off, and he again returned to folly.

When about ſixteen years of age, it pleaſed God effectually to turn him to himſelf. A ſermon delivered by Mr. *Birt*, who was then co-paſtor with Mr. *Gibbs*, of the Baptiſt church at Plymouth, was the firſt mean of impreſſing his heart with a ſenſe of his loſt condition, and of directing him to the goſpel remedy. The change in him appears to have been ſudden, but effectual; and the recollection of his former vicious propenſities, though a ſource of bitterneſs, yet furniſhed a ſtrong evidence of its being the work of God. "I believe," he ſays, "few converſions were more joyful. The change produced in my views, feelings, and conduct, was ſo evident to myſelf, that I could no more doubt of its being from God, than of my exiſtence. I had the witneſs in myſelf, and was filled with peace and joy unſpeakable."

His feelings being naturally ſtrong, and receiving a new direction, he entered into religion with all his heart; but not having known the devices of Satan, his ſoul was entangled by its own ardour, and he was thrown into great perplexity. Having read Doddridge's *Riſe and Progreſs of Religion in the Soul*, he determined formally to dedicate himſelf to the Lord, in the manner recommended in the ſeventeenth chapter of that work. The form of a covenant, as there drawn up, he alſo adopted as his own; and that he might bind himſelf in the moſt ſolemn and affecting manner, *ſigned it with his blood*. But afterwards failing in his engagements, he was plunged into dreadful perplexity, and almoſt into deſpair. On a review of

of his covenant, he seems to have accused himself of a pharisaical reliance upon the strength of his own resolutions; and therefore taking the paper to the top of his father's house, he tore it into small pieces, and threw it from him to be scattered by the wind. He did not however consider his obligation to be the Lord's as hereby nullified; but feeling more suspicion of himself, he depended upon *the blood of the cross*.

After this he was baptized, and became a member of the Baptist church at Plymouth, the ministers and members of which, in a few years, perceived in him talents for public work. Being solicited by both his pastors, he exercised as a probationer; and receiving a unanimous call from the church, entered on the work of the ministry in November, 1786. Soon after this he went to the academy at Bristol, then under the superintendence of Dr. Caleb Evans.

Mr. *Birt*, now pastor of the Baptist church, in the square, Plymouth Dock, in a letter to the compiler of these memoirs, thus speaks of him:—"Though he was, so far as I know, the very first fruits of my ministry, on my coming hither, and though our friendship and affection for each other were great and constant; yet previous to his going to Bristol I had but few opportunities of conversing with him, or of making particular observations on him. All who best knew him, however, will remember, and must tenderly speak of his loving deportment; and those who attended the conferences with him soon received the most impressive intimations of his future eminence as a minister of our Lord Jesus Christ."

"Very few," adds Mr. Birt, "have entered upon, and gone through their religious profession with more exalted piety, or warmer zeal, than *Samuel Pearce*; and as few have exceeded him in the possession and display of that *charity* which 'suffereth long, and is kind, that envieth not, that vaunteth not itself, and is not puffed up, that

that doth not behave itſelf unſeemly, that ſeeketh not her own, is not eaſily provoked, thinketh no evil, that beareth all things, believeth all things, endureth all things.' But why ſhould I ſay this to you? You knew him yourſelf."

While at the academy he was much diſtinguiſhed by the amiableneſs of his ſpirit and behaviour. It is ſometimes obſervable that where the talents of a young man are admired by his friends, and his early efforts flattered by crowded auditories, effects have been produced which have proved fatal to his future reſpectability and uſefulneſs. But this was not the caſe with Mr. Pearce. Amidſt the tide of popularity, which even at that early period attended his miniſterial exerciſes, his tutors have more than once remarked that he never appeared to them to be in the leaſt elated, or to have neglected his proper ſtudies; but was uniformly the ſerious, induſtrious, docile, modeſt, and unaſſuming young man.

Towards the latter end of 1789, he came to the church in Cannon-ſtreet, Birmingham, to whom he was recommended by Mr. Hall, now of Cambridge, at that time one of his tutors. After preaching to them a while on approbation, he was choſen to be their paſtor. His ordination was in Auguſt, 1790. Dr. Evans gave the charge, and the late Mr. Robert Hall of Arnſby, delivered an addreſs to the church on the occaſion. In the year 1791, he married Miſs *Sarah Hopkins*, daughter of Mr. Joſhua Hopkins of Alceſter; a connexion which appears to have been all along a ſource of great enjoyment to him. The following lines addreſſed to Mrs. Pearce when he was on a journey, a little more than a year after their marriage, ſeem to be no more than a common letter: yet they ſhew, not only the tenderneſs of his affection, but his heavenly mindedneſs, his gentle manner of perſuading, and how every argument was fetched from religion, and every incident improved for introducing it:——

"Chipping

" Chipping Norton, Aug. 15, 1792.

" I BELIEVE on retroſpection that I have hitherto rather anticipated the propoſed time of my return, than delayed the interview with my dear Sarah for an hour. But what ſhall I ſay, my love, now to reconcile you to my procraſtinating my return for ſeveral days more? Why I will ſay, it appears I am called of God; and I truſt the piety of both of us will ſubmit and ſay, *Thy will be done.*

" You have no doubt peruſed Mr. Ryland's letter to me, wherein I find he ſolicits an exchange. The reaſon he aſſigns is ſo obviouſly important, that a much greater ſacrifice than we are called to make, ſhould not be withheld to accompliſh it. I therefore propoſe, God willing, to ſpend the next Lord's-day at Northampton.—I thought of taking tea with you this evening: *that* would have been highly gratifying to us both; but it muſt be our meat and drink to do and ſubmit to the will of our heavenly Father. All is good that comes from him, and all is done right which is done in obedience to him. Oh to be perfectly reſigned to his diſpoſal—how good is it! May you, my deareſt Sarah, and myſelf, daily prove the ſweetneſs of this pious frame of ſoul: then all our duties will be ſweet, all our trials will be light, all our pleaſures will be pure, and all our hopes ſanctified.

" This evening I hope to be at Northampton. Let your prayers aſſiſt my efforts on the enſuing Sabbath. You will, I truſt, find in Mr. R—— a ſhip richly laden with ſpiritual treaſures. Oh for more ſupplies from the exhauſtleſs mines of grace!

S. P."

THE ſoul of Mr. Pearce was formed for friendſhip: It was natural therefore to ſuppoſe, that while engaging in the purſuit of his ſtudies at the academy, he would contract religious intimacies with ſome of his brethren;

and it is worthy of notice, that the grand cement of his friendſhip was *kindred piety*. In the two following letters, addreſſed to his friend, Mr. Steadman, the reader will perceive the juſtneſs of this remark, as well as the encouraging proſpects which ſoon attended his labours at Birmingham:——

"My very dear Brother, May 9, 1792.

"YOU live ſo remote that I can hear nothing of your proſperity at Broughton. I hope you are ſettled with a comfortable people, and that you enjoy much of your Maſter's preſence, both in the ſtudy and the pulpit. For my part, I have nothing to lament but an inſenſible, ungrateful heart, and that is ſufficient cauſe for lamentation. This, only this, bows me down; and under this preſſure I am ready to adopt the words I preached from laſt evening,—*Oh that I had wings like a dove, for then would I fly away and be at reſt!*

"As a people we are generally united: I believe more ſo than moſt churches of the ſame dimenſions. Our number of members is about two hundred and ninety-five, between forty and fifty of whom have joined us ſince I ſaw you, and moſt of them I have the happineſs of conſidering as my children in the faith.—There is ſtill a crying out amongſt us after ſalvation; and ſtill, through much grace, it is my happineſs to point them to the Lamb of God, who taketh away the ſins of the world.

"In preaching, I have often peculiar liberty; at other times barren. I ſuppoſe my experience is like that of moſt of my brethren: but I am not weary of my work. I hope ſtill that I am willing to ſpend and be ſpent, ſo that I may win ſouls to Chriſt, and finiſh my courſe with joy: but I want more heart religion: I want a more habitual ſenſe of the divine preſence: I want to walk with God as Enoch walked. There is nothing that grieves me ſo much, or brings ſo much darkneſs

on

on my soul, as my little spirituality, and frequent wanderings in secret prayer. I cannot neglect the duty; but it is seldom that I enjoy it.

> 'Ye that love the Lord indeed,
> Tell me, is it so with you?'

When I come to the house of God, I pray and preach with freedom. Then I think the presence of the people seems to weigh more with me than the presence of God, and deem myself a hypocrite, almost ready to leave my pulpit, for some more pious preacher. But the Lord does own the word; and again I say, if I go to hell myself, I will do what I can to keep others from going thither; and so in the strength of the Lord I will.

"An observation once made to me helps to support me above water:—"If you did not plough in your closet, you would not reap in the pulpit." And again I think, the Lord *dwelleth in Zion*, and loveth it *more* than the dwellings of Jacob.

S. P."

" Feb. 1, 1793.

"THE pleasure which your friendly epistle gave me, rises beyond expression; and it is one of the first wishes of my heart ever to live in your valued friendship. Accept this, and my former letters, my dear brother, as sufficient evidences of my ardent wishes to preserve by correspondence, that mutual remembrance of each other, which on my part will ever be pleasurable, and on yours, I hope, never painful.

"But ah, how soon may we be rendered incapable of such an intercourse! When I left Bristol, I left it with regret. I was sorry to leave my studies to embark (inexperienced as I am) on the tempestuous ocean of public life, where the high blowing winds, and rude and noisy billows, must more or less inevitably annoy the

the trembling voyager. Nor did it make a small addition to my pain, that I was to part with so many of my dear companions, with whom I had spent so many happy hours, either in furnishing or unburthening the mind. I need not say, among the first of these I considered *Josiah Evans*.* But ah, my friend, we shall see his face no more! Through divine grace I hope we shall go to him; but he will not return to us. 'He wasted away, he gave up the ghost, and where is he?' I was prepared for the news because I expected it. The last time I heard directly from him was by a very serious and affectionate letter, which I received, I think, last September. To it I replied; but received no answer. I conjectured, I feared; and now my conjectures and fears are all realized. Dear departed youth! Thy memory will ever be grateful to this affectionate breast. May thy amiable qualities live again in thy surviving friend, that to the latest period of his life he may thank God for the friendship of *Josiah Evans!*

"I assure you, my dear Steadman, I feel, keenly feel, the force of the sentiment, which Blair thus elegantly expresses,—

> 'Of joys departed, ne'er to be recall'd,
> How painful the remembrance!'

"But I sorrow not as one without hope. I have a twofold hope: I hope he is now among the spirits of the just made perfect, and that he will be of the blessed and holy number who have part in the first resurrection: and I hope also through the same rich, free, sovereign, almighty, matchless grace, to join the number too. Pleasing thought! Unite to divide no more!

"I preached last night from Rev. xxi. 6. *I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.* I took occasion to expound the former part of the

* See a brief account of him, given in part by Mr. Pearce, in Dr. Rippon's *Register*, Vol. I. p. 512—516.

the chapter, and found therein a pleaſure inexpreſſible; eſpecially when ſpeaking from the firſt verſe,—*And there was no more ſea.* The firſt idea which preſented itſelf to me was this,—*there ſhall be no bar to intercourſe.* Whether the thought be juſt or not, I leave with you and my hearers to determine; but I found happy liberty in illuſtrating it. What is it that ſeparates one nation, and one part of the globe from another? Is it not the ſea? Are not Chriſtians, though all of one family, the common Father of which is God, ſeparated by this ſea, or that river, or the other ſtream below? Yes; but they are one family ſtill. *There* ſhall be none of theſe obſtructions to communion, of theſe bars to intercourſe; nothing to divide their affections, or diſunite their praiſe forever.—Forgive my freedoms. I am writing to a friend, to a brother. S. P."

THERE are few, if any, thinking men, but who at ſome ſeaſons have had their minds perplexed with regard to religious principles, even thoſe which are of the greateſt importance. In the end, however, where the heart is right, they commonly iſſue in a more decided attachment to the truth. Thus it was with Mr. Pearce. In another part of the above letter, he thus writes to his friend Steadman:—"I have, ſince I ſaw you, been much perplexed about ſome doctrinal points, both Arminian and Socinian, I believe through reading very attentively, but without ſufficient dependence on the Spirit of truth, ſeveral controverſies on thoſe ſubjects; particularly the writings of Whitby, Prieſtley, and others. Indeed, had the ſtate of mind I was in about ten weeks ſince continued, I ſhould have been incapable of preaching with comfort at all. But in the mount of the Lord will he be ſeen. Juſt as I thought of giving up, he who hath the hearts of all men in his hand, and turneth them as the rivers of water are turned, was pleaſed, by a merciful though afflicting providence, to ſet me at a happy liberty. "I

"I was violently seized with a disorder very rife here, and which carried off many, supposed to be an inflammation in the bowels. One Sabbath evening I felt such alarming symptoms that I did not expect to see the Monday morning. In these circumstances I realized the feelings of a dying man. My mind had been so accustomed to reflect on virtue and moral goodness, that the first thing I attempted was a survey of my own conduct; my diligence and faithfulness in the ministry, my unspotted life, &c. &c. But ah! vain props these for dying men to rest on! Such heart sins, such corruptions, and evil propensities, recurred to my mind, that if ever I knew the moment when I felt my own righteousness to be like loathsome and filthy rags, it was then. And where should I, where could I, where did I flee, but to Him, whose glory and grace I had been of late degrading, at least in my thoughts? Yes, there I saw peace for guilty consciences was to be *alone* obtained through an almighty Saviour. And oh! wonderful to tell, I again came to him; nor was I sent away without the blessing. I found him full of all compassion, ready to receive the most ungrateful of men.

'Oh, to grace how great a debtor
Daily I'm constrain'd to be.'

Thus, my dear brother, was the snare broken, and thus I escaped.

'A debtor to mercy alone,
Of covenant mercy I sing.'

Join with me in praising Him, who remembered me in my low estate, because his mercy endureth for ever. Yet this is among the *all things*. I have found it has made me more spiritual in preaching. I have prized the gospel more than ever, and hope it will be the means of guarding me against future temptations.

Your brother, with ardent affection, in the dear Lord Jesus,

S. P."

FROM

FROM his first coming to Birmingham, his meekness and patience were put to the trial by an Antinomian spirit which infected many individuals, both in and out of his congregation. It is well known with what affection it was his practice to beseech sinners to be reconciled to God, and to exhort Christians to the exercise of practical godliness: but these were things which they could not endure. Soothing doctrine was all they desired. Therefore it was, that his ministry was traduced by them as Arminian, and treated with neglect and contempt. But, like his Divine Master, he bore the contradiction of sinners against himself, and this while he had the strongest satisfaction that in those very things to which they objected, he was pleasing God. And though he plainly perceived the pernicious influence of their principles upon their own minds, as well as the minds of others, yet he treated them with great gentleness and long forbearance: and when it became necessary to exclude such of this description as were in communion with him, it was with the greatest reluctance that he came into that measure, and not without having first tried all other means in vain. He was not apt to deal in harsh language; yet, in one of his letters about that time, he speaks of the principles and spirit of these people as a "cursed leaven."

Among his numerous religious friendships, he seems to have formed one for the special purpose of *spiritual improvement*. This was with Mr. Summers of London, who often accompanied him in his journeys; to whom, therefore, it might be expected he would open his heart without reserve. Here, it is true, we sometimes see him, like his brethren, groaning under darkness, want of spirituality, and the remains of indwelling sin; but frequently rising above all, as into his native element, and pouring forth his ardent soul in expressions of joy and praise. On Aug. 19, 1793, he writes thus:—

"My

"My dear Brother,

"WHEN I take my pen to purſue my correſpondence with *you*, I have no concern but to communicate ſomething which may anſwer the ſame end we propoſe in our annual journeys: viz. lending ſome aſſiſtance in the important object of *getting, and keeping nearer to God.* This I am perſuaded is the mark at which we ſhould be continually aiming, nor reſt ſatisfied until we attain that to which we aſpire. I am really aſhamed of myſelf, when, on the one hand, I review the time that has elapſed ſince I firſt aſſumed the Chriſtian name, with the opportunities of improvement in godlineſs which have crowded on my moments ſince that period; and when on the other, I *feel* the little advance I have made! More *light*, to be ſure, I have; but light *without heat* leaves the Chriſtian half diſſatisfied. Yeſterday, I preached on the duty of engagedneſs in God's ſervice, from Jer. xxx. 21, *Who is this that engaged his heart to approach unto me? ſaith the Lord.* (A text for which I am indebted to our laſt journey.) While urging the neceſſity of *heart* religion, including ſincerity and ardour, I found myſelf much aſſiſted by reflecting on the ardour which our dear Redeemer diſcovered in the cauſe of ſinners. "Ah," I could not help ſaying, "if our Saviour had meaſured his intenſeneſs in his engagements for us by our fervency in fulfilling our engagements to him,—we ſhould have been now farther from hope than we are from perfection."

'Dear Lord, the ardour of *thy* love
Reproves my cold returns.'

"Two things are cauſes of daily aſtoniſhment to me:—The readineſs of Chriſt to come from heaven to earth for me; and my backwardneſs to riſe from earth to heaven with him. But oh how animating the proſpect! A time approaches when we ſhall riſe to ſink no more: to "be forever with the Lord." To be *with the Lord* for a week, for a day, for an hour; how ſweetly muſt the

the moments paſs! But to be *forever* with the Lord,—*that* inſtamps ſalvation with perfection; that gives an energy to our hopes, and a dignity to our joy, ſo as to render it *unſpeakable and full of glory!* I have had a few realizing moments ſince we parted, and the effect has been, I truſt, a broken heart. Oh my brother, it is deſirable to have a broken heart, were it only for the ſake of the pleaſure it feels in being helped and healed by Jeſus! Heart affecting views of the curſed effects of ſin are highly ſalutary to a Chriſtian's growth in humility, confidence, and gratitude. At once how abaſing and exalting is the compariſon of our loathſome hearts with that of the lovely Saviour! In Him, we ſee all that can charm an angel's heart: in *ourſelves*, all that can gratify a devil's. And yet we may reſt perfectly aſſured that theſe neſts of iniquity ſhall ere long be transformed into the temples of God; and theſe ſighs of ſorrow be exchanged for ſongs of praiſe.

"Laſt Lord's day I ſpent the moſt profitable Sabbath to myſelf that I ever remember ſince I have been in the miniſtry; and to this hour I feel the ſweet ſolemnities of that day delightfully protracted. Ah, my brother, were it not for paſt experience, I ſhould ſay,

'My heart preſumes I cannot loſe
The reliſh all my days.'

But now I rejoice with trembling; deſiring to "hold faſt what I have, that no man take my crown." Yet fearing that I ſhall find, how

—'Ere one fleeting hour is paſt,
The flatt'ring world employs
Some ſenſual bait to ſeize my taſte,
And to pollute my joys.'

Yours in our dear Saviour,

S. P."

In April, 1794, dropping a few lines to the compiler of these Memoirs, on a Lord's-day evening, he thus concludes:—"We have had a good day. I find, as a dear friend once said, *It is pleasant speaking for God when we walk with him.* Oh for much of Enoch's spirit! The Head of the church grant it to my dear brother, and his affectionate friend,

S. P."

In another letter to Mr. Summers, dated June 24, 1794, he thus writes:—"We, my friend, have entered on a correspondence of heart with heart, and must not lose sight of that avowed object. I thank you sincerely for continuing the remembrance of so unworthy a creature in your intercourse with Heaven; and I thank that sacred Spirit, whose quickening influences, you say, you enjoy in the exercise. Yes, my brother, I have reaped the fruits of your supplications. I have been indulged with some seasons of unusual joy, tranquil as solitude, and solid as the rock on which our hopes are built. In public exercises, peculiar assistance has been afforded; especially in these three things:—The exaltation of the Redeemer's glory; the detection of the crooked ways, false refuges, and self delusions of the human heart; and the stirring up of the saints to press onward, making God's cause their own, and considering themselves as living not for themselves, but for *Him* alone.

"Nor hath the word been without its effect; above fifty have been added to our church this year, most of whom I rejoice in as the seals of my ministry in the Lord. Indeed I am surrounded with goodness; and scarce a day passes over my head, but I say, were it not for an *ungrateful heart* I should be the happiest man alive; and *that* excepted, I neither expect nor wish to be happier in this world. My wife, my children, and myself are uninterruptedly healthy; my friends kind; my

my ſoul at reſt; my labours ſucceſsful, &c. Who ſhould be content and thankful, if I ſhould not? Oh my brother, help me to praiſe!

S. P."

In a letter to Mrs. Pearce, from Plymouth, dated Sept. 2, 1794, the dark ſide of the cloud ſeems towards him:—"I have felt much barrenneſs, ſays he, as to ſpiritual things ſince I have been here, compared with my uſual frame at home; and it is a poor exchange to enjoy the creature at the expenſe of the Creator's preſence: A few ſeaſons of ſpirituality I have enjoyed; but my heart, my inconſtant heart is too prone to rove from its proper centre. Pray for me, my dear, my deareſt friend! I do for you daily. Oh wreſtle for me, that I may have more of Enoch's ſpirit! I am fully perſuaded that a Chriſtian is no longer really happy, and inwardly ſatisfied, than whilſt he walks with God; and I would this moment rejoice to abandon every pleaſure here for a cloſer walk with him. I cannot, amidſt all the round of ſocial pleaſure, amidſt the moſt inviting ſcenes of nature, *feel* that peace with God which paſſeth underſtanding. My thirſt for preaching Chriſt, I fear, abates, and a deteſtable vanity for the reputation of a "good preacher" (as the world terms it) has already coſt me many conflicts. Daily I feel convinced of the propriety of a remark which my friend Summers made on his journey to Wales, that "It is eaſier for a Chriſtian to walk habitually near to God, than to be irregular in our walk with him." But I want reſolution; I want a contempt for the world; I want more heavenly-mindedneſs; I want more humility; I want much, very much of that, which God alone can beſtow. Lord, help the weakeſt lamb in all thy flock!

"I preached this evening from Cant. ii. 3. *I ſat down under his ſhadow with great delight, and his fruit was ſweet*

ſweet to my taſte. But how little love for my Saviour did I feel! With what little affection and zeal did I ſpeak! I am, by ſome, praiſed. I am followed by many. I am reſpected by moſt of my acquaintance. But all this is nothing; yea, leſs than nothing, compared with poſſeſſing "this teſtimony, *that I pleaſe* GOD." Oh thou Friend of ſinners, humble me by repentance, and melt me down with love.

"To-morrow morning I ſet off for Launceſton. I write to night, leſt my ſtay in Cornwall might make my delay appear tedious to the dear and deſerving object of my moſt undiſſembled love. Oh my Sarah, had I as much proof that I love *Jeſus Chriſt*, as I have of my love to *you*, I ſhould prize it more than rubies! As often as you can find an hour for correſpondence, think of your more than ever affectionate

S. P."

In another to Mr. Summers, dated Nov. 10, 1794, he ſays—"I ſuppoſe I ſhall viſit London in the Spring. Prepare my way by communion both with God and man. I hope your ſoul proſpers. I have enjoyed more of God within this month than ever ſince the day of my eſpouſals with him. Oh my brother, help me to praiſe! I cannot ſay that I am quite ſo exalted in my frame to-day; yet ſtill I acknowledge what I have lived upon for weeks,—That were there no being or thing in the univerſe, beſide God and me, I ſhould be at no loſs for happineſs. Oh!

'Tis heav'n to reſt in his embrace,
And no where elſe but there.'

S. P."

HYMN

HYMN

By Mr. PEARCE, *ſoon after his Converſion.*

1

O HOW ſweet it is to me,
'Fore my gracious Lord to fall,
Talk with him continually,
Make my bleſſed Jeſus all.

2

Other pleaſures I have ſought,
Try'd the world a thouſand times;
Peace purſu'd, but found it not,
For I ſtill retain'd my crimes.

3

Never could my heart be bleſs'd,
Till from guilt I found it freed;
Jeſus now has me releas'd;
I in him am free indeed.

4

Saviour, bind me to thy croſs,
Let thy love poſſeſs my heart;
All beſides I count but droſs:
Chriſt and I will never part.

5

In his blood ſuch peace I find,
In his love ſuch joy is giv'n;
He who is to Jeſus join'd,
Finds on earth a little heav'n.

The following lines appear to have been written ſoon after, if not before, his entrance on the work of the miniſtry :—

EXCITEMENT TO EARLY DUTY:

OR,

The Lord's-day Morning.

1 WHENE'ER I look into thy word,
And read about my deareſt Lord,
The Friend of ſinful man;
And trace my Saviour's footſteps there,
What humble love, what holy fear
Through all his conduct ran!

2 If I regard the matchleſs grace
He ſhew'd unto the human race,
How he for them became
A poor ſojourner here below,
Oppreſs'd by pain and ſorrow too,
I can't but love his name.

3 And when I view his love to God,
Thoſe ſteps in which the Saviour trod,
I long to tread them too;
I long to be inſpir'd with zeal
To execute my Father's will,
As Jeſus us'd to do.

4 I read that he, on duty bent,
To lonely places often went,
To ſeek his Father there:
The early morn and dewy ground
Can witneſs, they the Saviour found
Engag'd in fervent pray'r.

5 And

5 And did my Saviour uſe to pray,
Before the light unveil'd the day?
And ſhall I backward be?
No, deareſt Lord, forbid the thought;
Help me to fight, as Jeſus fought,
Each foe that hinders me.

6 And you, my friends, who love his name,
Who love to imitate the Lamb,
And more of Jeſus know;
Come, let us all ſurround his throne,
And ſee what bleſſings on his own
Our Saviour will beſtow.

7 Though fears be great, temptations ſtrong,
And though we oft have waited long,
Perhaps he may deſign
This morn to give each ſoul to ſee,
And ſay with Paul, "He dy'd for me,"
And my Redeemer's mine.

8 Now cheerful we'll begin to pray,
That he will waſh our ſins away
In his atoning blood;
That he his bleſſing may beſtow,
And give each ſinner here to know
That he's a child of God.

On the Scriptures.

1 STUPENDOUS love in Chriſt doth dwell,
Love which no mortal tongue can tell;
But yet ſo gracious is the Lord,
He tells his people in his word.

2 Here, in thoſe lines of love, I ſee
What Chriſt my Saviour did for me;
Here I behold the wondrous plan
By which he ſaves rebellious man.

3 Here

3 Here we may view the Saviour, God,
Oppreſs'd by pain, o'erwhelm'd with blood;
And if we aſk the reaſon, why?
He kindly ſays, "For you I die."

4 Here love and mercy, truth and grace
Conſpicuous ſhine in Jeſus' face;
Here we may trace the wondrous road,
By which a ſinner comes to God.

5 O boundleſs grace! O matchleſs love
That brought the Saviour from above,
That caus'd the God for man to die,
Expiring in an agony.

6 Then ſay, my ſoul, canſt thou engage
In tracing o'er the ſacred page,
And there his love and mercy ſee,
And not love him who dy'd for thee?

7 O ſtupid heart! O wretched ſoul!
So cold, ſo languid, and ſo dull;
Angels deſire this love to know,
O may I feel theſe longings too!

8 Deſcend, thou Spirit of the Lord,
Thy light, and help, and grace afford;
And, while I read theſe pages o'er,
Conſtrain my ſoul to love thee more.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

HIS LABORIOUS EXERTIONS IN PROMOTING MISSIONS TO THE HEATHEN, AND OFFERING HIMSELF TO BECOME A MISSIONARY.

MR. PEARCE has been uniformly the ſpiritual and the active ſervant of Chriſt; but neither his ſpirituality nor his activity would have appeared in the manner they have, but for his engagements in the *introduction of the goſpel among the heathen.*

It was not long after his ſettlement at Birmingham, that he became acquainted with Mr. CAREY, in whom he found a ſoul nearly akin to his own. When the brethren in the counties of Northampton and Leiceſter formed themſelves into a Miſſionary Society at Kettering, in October, 1792, he was there, and entered into the buſineſs with all his heart. On his return to Birmingham, he communicated the ſubject to his congregation with ſo much effect, that to the ſmall ſum of £13 : 2 : 6, with which the ſubſcription was begun, was added £70, which was collected and tranſmitted to the Treaſurer; and the leading members of the church formed themſelves into an Aſſiſtant Society. Early in the following Spring, when it was reſolved that our brethren, *Thomas* and *Carey*, ſhould go on a miſſion to the Hindoos, and a conſiderable ſum of money was wanted for the purpoſe, he laboured with increaſing ardour in various parts of the kingdom; and when the object was accompliſhed, he rejoiced in all his labour, ſmiling in every company, and bleſſing God.

During his labours and journeys, on this important object, he wrote ſeveral letters to his friends, an extract or two from which will diſcover the ſtate of his mind at this period, as well as the encouragements that he met with in his work at home:—

To

To Mr. STEADMAN.

"*Birmingham, Feb.* 8, 1793.

"My very dear Brother,

"UNION of sentiment often creates friendship among carnal men, and similarity of feeling never fails to produce affection among pious men, as far as that similarity is known. I have loved you ever since I knew you. We saw, we felt alike in the interesting concerns of personal religion. We formed a reciprocal attachment. We expressed it by words. We agreed to do so by correspondence; and we have not altogether been wanting to our engagements. But our correspondence has been interrupted, not, I believe, through any diminution of regard on either side; I am persuaded not on mine. I rather condemn myself as the first aggressor; but I excuse while I condemn, and so would you, did you know half the concerns which devolve upon me in my present situation. Birmingham is a central place; the inhabitants are numerous; our members are between three and four hundred. The word preached has lately been remarkably blessed. In less than five months I baptized nearly forty persons, almost all newly awakened. Next Lord's-day week I expect to add to their number. These persons came to my house to propose the most important of all inquiries,—"What must we do to be saved?" I have been thus engaged some weeks during the greatest part of most days. This, with four sermons a week, will account for my neglect. But your letter, received this evening, calls forth every latent affection of my heart for you. We are, my dear brother, not only united in the common object of pursuit,—*salvation;* not only rest our hopes on the same foundation,—*Jesus Christ;* but we feel alike respecting the poor Heathens. Oh how Christianity expands the mind! What tenderness for our poor fellow-sinners! What sympathy for their moral misery! What desires to do them everlasting good, doth it

it provoke! How satisfying to our judgments is this evidence of grace! How gratifying to our present taste are these benevolent breathings! Oh how I love that man whose soul is deeply affected with the importance of the precious gospel to idolatrous heathens. Excellently, my dear brother, you observe, that, great as its blessings are in the estimation of a sinner called in a Christian country, inexpressibly greater must they shine on the newly illuminated mind of a converted pagan.

"We shall be glad of all your assistance in a pecuniary way, as the expense will be heavy.—Dear brother *Carey* has paid us a visit of love this week. He preached excellently to night. I expect brother *Thomas* next week or the week after. I wish you would meet him here. I have a house at your command, and a heart greatly attached to you.

S. P."

To Mr. FULLER.

"*Feb.* 23, 1793.

"I AM willing to go any where, and do any thing in my power; but I hope no plan will be suffered to interfere with the affecting,—hoped for,—dreaded day, March 13. (the day of our brethren, *Carey* and *Thomas*' solemn designation at Leicester.) Oh how the anticipation of it at once rejoices and afflicts me. Our hearts need steeling to part with our much-loved brethren, who are about to venture their all for the name of the Lord Jesus. I feel my soul melting within me when I read the twentieth chapter of the Acts, and especially verses 36—38. But why grieve? We shall see them again. Oh yes; them and the children whom the Lord will give them;—we and the children whom the Lord hath given us. We shall meet again, not to weep and pray, but to smile and praise.

S. P."

FROM

FROM the day of the departure of the Miſſionaries, no one was more importunate in prayer than Mr. Pearce; and on the news of their ſafe arrival, no one was more filled with joy and thankfulneſs.

Hitherto we had witneſſed his zeal in promoting this important undertaking *at home;* but this did not ſatisfy him. In October, 1794, we were given to underſtand that he had for ſome time had it in ſerious contemplation to go himſelf, and to caſt in his lot with his brethren in India. When his deſigns were firſt diſcovered, his friends and connexions were much concerned about it, and endeavoured to perſuade him that he was already in a ſphere of uſefulneſs too important to be relinquiſhed. But his anſwer was, that they were too intereſted in the affair to be competent judges. And nothing would ſatisfy him ſhort of his making a formal offer of his ſervices to the Committee: nor could he be happy for *them* to decide upon it, without their appointing a day of ſolemn prayer for the purpoſe, and, when aſſembled, hearing an account of the principal exerciſes of his mind upon the ſubject, with the reaſons which induced him to make the propoſal, as well as the reaſons alleged by his connexions againſt it.

On October 4, 1794, he wrote to an intimate friend, of whom he entertained a hope that he might accompany him, as follows:—

"Laſt Wedneſday I rode to Northampton, where a miniſters' meeting was held on the following day. We talked much about the miſſion. We read ſome freſh and very encouraging accounts. We lamented that we could obtain no ſuitable perſons to ſend out to the aſſiſtance of our brethren. Now what do you think was ſaid at this meeting? My dear brother! do not be ſurprized that *all* preſent united in opinion, that in all our connexion there was no man known to us ſo ſuitable

ſuitable as *you*, provided you were diſpoſed for it, and things could be brought to bear. I thought it right to mention this circumſtance; and one thing more I cannot refrain from ſaying, that were it manifeſtly the will of God, I ſhould call that the happieſt hour of my life, which witneſſed our *both* embarking with our families on board one ſhip, as helpers of the ſervants of Jeſus Chriſt already in Hindoſtan. Yes; I could unreluctantly leave Europe and all its contents for the pleaſures and perils of this glorious ſervice. Often my heart in the ſincereſt ardours thus breathes forth its deſires unto God,—"Here am I, ſend me." But I am ignorant whether you from experience can realize my feelings. Perhaps you have friendſhip enough for me to lay open your meditations on this ſubject in your next. If you have had half the exerciſes that I have, it will be a relief to your labouring mind: or if you think I have made too free with you, reprove me, and I will love you ſtill. Oh if I could find a heart that had been tortured and raviſhed like my own in this reſpect, I ſhould form a new kind of alliance, and feel a friendſhip of a novel ſpecies. With eagerneſs ſhould I communicate all the viciſſitudes of my ſenſations, and with eagerneſs liſten to a recital of kindred feelings. With impatience I ſhould ſeek, and with gratitude receive direction and ſupport, and, I hope, feel a new occaſion of thankfulneſs, when I bow my knee to the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort. Whence is it that I thus write to *you*, as I have never written to any one before? Is there a fellowſhip of the Spirit; or is it the confidence that I have in your friendſhip that thus directs my pen? Tell me, dear ———! Tell me how you have felt, and how you ſtill feel on this intereſting ſubject, and do not long delay the gratification to your very affectionate friend and brother,

S. P."

About a month preceding the decision of this affair, he drew up a *narrative* of his experience respecting it; resolving at the same time to set apart one day in every week for secret fasting and prayer to God for direction; and to keep a *diary* of the exercises of his mind during the month.

When the Committee were met at Northampton according to his desire, he presented to them the narrative; and which was as follows:—

"October 8, 1794. Having had some peculiar exercises of mind relative to my personally attempting to labour for the dear Redeemer amongst the *heathen*; and being at a loss to know what is the will of the Lord in this matter respecting me, I have thought that I might gain some satisfaction by adopting these two resolutions;—First, That I will, as in the presence of God, faithfully endeavour to recollect the various workings of my mind on this subject, from the first period of my feeling any desire of this nature, until now, and commit them to writing; together with what considerations do now, on the one hand, impel me to the work, and on the other, what prevent m efrom immediately resolving to enter upon it. Secondly, That I will from this day keep a regular journal, with special relation to this matter.

"This account and journal will, I hope, furnish me with much assistance in forming a future opinion of the path of duty; as well as help any friends whom I may hereafter think proper to consult, to give me suitable advice in the business. Lord, help me!

"It is very common for young converts to feel strong desires for the conversion of others. These desires immediately followed the evidences of my own religion: and I remember well they were particularly fixed upon the

the poor heathens. I believe the first week that I knew the grace of God in truth, I put up many fervent cries to Heaven in their behalf; and at the same time felt a strong desire to be employed in promoting their salvation. It was not long after, that the first settlers sailed for Botany Bay. I longed to go with them, although in company with the convicts, in hopes of making known the blessings of the great salvation in New Zealand. I actually had thought of making an effort to go out unknown to my friends; but ignorant how to proceed, I abandoned my purpose. Nevertheless I could not help talking about it; and at one time a report was circulated that I was really going, and a neighbouring minister very seriously conversed with me upon the subject.

"While I was at the Bristol Academy, the desire remained; but not with that energy as at first, except on one or two occasions. Being sent by my tutor to preach two Sabbaths at *Coldford*, I felt particular sweetness in devoting the evenings of the week to going from house to house among the colliers, who dwell in the *Forest of Deane*, adjoining the town, conversing and praying with them, and preaching to them. In these exercises I found the most solid satisfaction that I have ever known in discharging the duties of my calling. In a poor hut, with a stone to stand upon, and a three-legged stool for my desk, surrounded with thirty or forty of the smutty neighbours, I have felt such an unction from above, that my whole auditory have been melted into tears, whilst directed to *the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world;* and I, weeping among them, could scarcely speak, or they hear, for interrupting sighs and sobs. Many a time did I then think, Thus it was with the apostles of our Lord, when they went from house to house among the poor heathen. In work like this, I could live and die. Indeed, had I at that time been at liberty to settle, I should have preferred that situation

tion to any in the kingdom with which I was then acquainted.

"But the Lord placed me in a situation very different. He brought me to Birmingham; and here, amongst the novelties, cares, and duties of my station, I do not remember any wish for foreign service, till after a residence of some months I heard Dr. Coke preach at one of Mr. Wesley's chapels, from Psalm lxviii. 31. *Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God.* Then it was, that, in Mr. Horne's phrase, "I felt a passion for missions." Then I felt an interest in the state of the heathen world far more deep and permanent than before, and seriously thought how I could best promote their obtaining the knowledge of the crucified Jesus.

"As no way at that time was open, I cannot say that I thought of taking a part of the good work among the heathen abroad; but resolved that I would render them all the assistance I could at home. My mind was employed during the residue of that week in meditating on Psalm lxvii. 3. *Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God;*—and the next Sabbath morning I spoke from those words, On the promised increase of the church of God. I had observed that our monthly meetings for prayer had been better attended than the other prayer-meetings, from the time that I first knew the people in Cannon-street: but I thought a more general attention to them was desirable. I therefore preached on the Sabbath-day evening preceding the next monthly prayer-meeting, from Matt. vi. 10. *Thy kingdom come;* and urged with ardour and affection a universal union of the serious part of the congregation in this exercise. It rejoiced me to see three times as many the next night as usual; and for some time after that, I had nearly equal cause for joy.

"As to my own part, I continued to preach much upon the promises of God respecting the conversion of the

the heathen nations; and by so doing, and always communicating to my people every piece of information I could obtain respecting the present state of missions, they soon imbibed the same spirit: and from that time to this they have discovered so much concern for the more extensive spread of the gospel, that at our monthly prayer-meetings, both stated and occasional, I should be as much surprised at the case of the heathen being omitted in any prayer, as at an omission of the name and merits of Jesus.

"Indeed it has been a frequent mean of enkindling my languid devotion, in my private, domestic, and public engagements in prayer. When I have been barren in petitioning for myself, and other things, often have I been sweetly enlarged when I came to notice the situation of those who were perishing for lack of knowledge.

"Thus I went on praying, and preaching, and conversing on the subject, till the time of brother *Carey's* ordination at Leicester, May 24, 1791. On the evening of that day, he read to the ministers a great part of his manuscript, since published; entitled, *An Inquiry into the obligations of Christians to use means for the conversion of the heathens.* This added fresh fuel to my zeal. But to pray and preach on the subject was all I could then think of doing. But when I heard of a proposed meeting at Kettering, Oct. 2, 1792, for the express purpose of considering our duty in regard of the heathen, I could not resist my inclination for going; although at that time I was not much acquainted with the ministers of the Northamptonshire association. There I got my judgment informed, and my heart increasingly interested. I returned home resolved to lay myself out in the cause. The public steps I have taken are too well known to need repeating: but my mind became now inclined to go among the heathen myself. Yet a consideration of my connexions with the dear people of God in Bir-

mingham, reſtrained my deſires, and kept me from naming my wiſhes to any body, (as I remember) except to brother Carey. With him I was pretty free. We had an intereſting converſation about it juſt before he left Europe. I ſhall never forget the *manner* of his ſaying, "Well, you will come after us." My heart ſaid, Amen! and my eagerneſs for the work increaſed; though I never talked freely about it, except to my wife, and we both then thought that my relation to the church in Cannon-ſtreet, and uſefulneſs there, forbad any ſuch an attempt. However, I have made it a conſtant matter of prayer, often begging of God, as I did when firſt I was diſpoſed for the work of the miniſtry, either that he would take away the deſire, or open a door for its fulfilment. And the reſult has uniformly been, that the more ſpiritual I have been in the frame of my mind, the more love I have felt for God; and the more communion I have enjoyed with him, ſo much the more diſpoſed have I been to engage as a miſſionary among the heathen.

"Until the accounts came of our brethren's entrance on the work in India, my connexions in Europe pretty nearly balanced my deſire for going abroad; and though I felt quite devoted to the Lord's will and work, yet I thought the ſcale rather preponderated on the ſide of my abiding in my preſent ſituation.

"But ſince our brethren's letters have informed us that there are ſuch proſpects of uſefulneſs in Hindoſtan, —that prieſts and people are ready to hear the word,— and that preachers are a thouſand times more wanted, than people to preach to, my heart has been more deeply affected than ever with their conditon; and my deſires for a participation of the toils and pleaſures, croſſes and comforts of which they are the ſubjects, are advanced to an anxiety which nothing can remove, and time ſeems to increaſe.

"It

"It has pleaſed GOD alſo lately to teach me more than ever, that HIMSELF is the *fountain* of happineſs; that likeneſs to him, friendſhip for him, and communion with him, form the baſis of all true enjoyment; and that this can be attained as well in an eaſtern jungle, amongſt Hindoos and Moors, as in the moſt poliſhed parts of Europe. The very *diſpoſition*, which, bleſſed be my dear Redeemer! he has given me, to be any thing, do any thing, or endure any thing, ſo that his name might be glorified,——I ſay, the *diſpoſition* itſelf is heaven begun below! I do feel a daily panting after more devotedneſs to his ſervice, and I can never think of my ſuffering Lord, without diſſolving into love; love which conſtrains me to glorify him with my body and ſpirit, which are his.

"I do often repreſent to myſelf all the poſſible hardſhips of a miſſion, ariſing from my own heart, the nature of the country, domeſtic connexions, diſappointment in my hopes, &c. &c.: And then I ſet over againſt them all, theſe two thoughts,—*I am God's ſervant; and God is my friend.* In this, I anticipate happineſs in the midſt of ſuffering, light in darkneſs, and life in death. Yea, I do not count my life dear unto myſelf, ſo that I may win ſome poor heathens unto Chriſt; and I am willing to be offered as a ſacrifice on the ſervice of the faith of the goſpel.

"Mr. Horne juſtly obſerves, 'that, in order to juſtify a man's undertaking the work of a miſſionary, he ſhould be qualified for it, diſpoſed heartily to enter upon it, and free from ſuch ties as exclude an engagement.'—As to the firſt, others muſt judge for me; but they muſt not be men who have an intereſt in keeping me at home. I ſhall rejoice in opportunities of attaining to an acquaintance with the ideas of judicious and *impartial* men in this matter, and with them I muſt leave it. A willingneſs to embark in this cauſe I do poſſeſs;

and

and I can hardly perſuade myſelf that God has for ten years inclined my heart to this work, without having any thing for me to do in it. But the third thing requires more conſideration; and here alone I heſitate."—Here he goes on to ſtate all the objections from this quarter, with his anſwers to them, leaving it with his brethren to decide when they had heard the whole.

The Committee, after the moſt ſerious and mature deliberation, though they were fully ſatisfied as to brother Pearce's qualifications, and greatly approved of his ſpirit, yet were unanimouſly of opinion *that he ought not to go;* and that not merely on account of his connexions at home, which might have been pleaded in the caſe of brother *Carey*, but on account of the miſſion itſelf, which required his aſſiſtance in the ſtation which he already occupied.

In this opinion, brother Carey himſelf, with ſingular diſintereſtedneſs of mind, afterwards concurred; and wrote to brother Pearce to the ſame effect.*

On receiving the opinion of the Committee, he immediately wrote to Mrs. P———, as follows:—

"Northampton, Nov. 13, 1794.

"My dear Sarah,

"I AM diſappointed, but not diſmayed. I ever wiſh to make my Saviour's will my own. I am more ſatisfied than ever I expected I ſhould be with a negative upon my earneſt deſires, becauſe the buſineſs has been ſo conducted, that, I think, (if by any means ſuch an iſſue could be inſured) the mind of Chriſt has been obtained. My dear brethren here have treated the affair with as much ſerioufneſs and affection as I could poſſibly deſire, and, I think, more than ſo inſignificant a worm could expect. After we had ſpent the former part of this day in faſting and prayer, with converſation on

* See Periodical Accounts, No. V. p. 374.

on the ſubject, till near two o'clock, brother Potts, King, and I retired. We prayed while the Committee conſulted. The caſe ſeemed difficult, and I ſuppoſe they were near two hours in deciding. At laſt, *time* forced them to a point; and their anſwer I incloſe for your ſatisfaction. Pray take care of it; it will ſerve for me to refer to when my mind may labour beneath a burden of guilt another day.

I am my dear Sarah's own

S. P."

The deciſion of the Committee, though it rendered him much more reconciled to abide in his native country than he could have been without it; yet did not in the leaſt abate his zeal for the object. As he could not promote it abroad, he ſeemed reſolved to lay himſelf out more for it at home. In March, 1795, after a dangerous illneſs, he ſays in a letter to Mr. Fuller—"Through mercy I am almoſt in a ſtate of convaleſcence. May my ſpared life be wholly devoted to the ſervice of my dear Redeemer. I do not care where I am, whether in England or in India, ſo I am employed as he would have me; but ſurely we need pray hard that God would ſend ſome more help to Hindoſtan."

In January, 1796, when he was firſt informed by the Secretary, of a young man, (Mr. Fountain) being deſirous of going, of the character that was given of him by our friend, Mr. Savage, of London, and of a Committee Meeting being in contemplation, he wrote thus in anſwer—"Your Letter, juſt arrived, put—I was going to ſay, another ſoul into my little body; at leaſt it has added new life to the ſoul I have. I cannot be contented with the thought of being abſent from your propoſed meeting. No, no; I muſt be there, (for my own

own ſake I mean) and try to ſing with you, 'O'er the gloomy hills of darkneſs.'"*

In Auguſt, the ſame year, having received a letter from India, he wrote to Mr. Fuller as follows—"Brother Carey ſpeaks in ſuch a manner of the effects of the goſpel in his neighbourhood, as in my view promiſes a fair illuſtration of our Lord's parable, when he compared the kingdom of heaven to a little leaven, hid in three meaſures of meal, which inſinuated itſelf ſo effectually as to leaven the lump at laſt. Bleſſed be God, the leaven is already in the meal. The fermentation is begun; and my hopes were never half ſo ſtrong as they are now, that the whole ſhall be effectually leavened. O THAT I WERE THERE TO WITNESS THE DELIGHTFUL PROCESS! But whither am I running? . . . I LONG TO WRITE YOU FROM HINDOSTAN!"

On receiving other Letters from India, in January, 1797, he thus writes:—"Perhaps you are now rejoicing in ſpirit with me over freſh intelligence from Bengal. This moment have I concluded reading two letters from brother Thomas: one to the Society, and the other to myſelf.* He ſpeaks of others from brother Carey. I hope they are already in your poſſeſſion. If his correſpondence has produced the ſame effects on your heart as brother Thomas's has on mine, you are filled with gladneſs and hope. I am grieved that I cannot convey them to you immediately. I long to witneſs the pleaſure their contents will impart to all whoſe hearts are with us. O that I were accounted worthy of the Lord to preach the goſpel to the Booteas!"

Being

* The 428 Hymn of Dr. Rippon's Selection, frequently ſung at our Committee Meetings.

* See theſe Letters printed in *Periodical Accounts*, No. IV. p. 294, 301.

Being detained from one of our miſſion meetings by preparing the Periodical Accounts for the preſs, he ſoon after wrote as follows: "We ſhall now get out No. IV. very ſoon. I hope it will go to the preſs in a very few days. Did you notice, that the very day on which we invited all our friends to a day of prayer on behalf of the miſſion, (Dec. 28, 1796) was the ſame in which brother Carey ſent his beſt and moſt intereſting accounts to the Society? I hope you had ſolemn and ſweet ſeaſons at Northampton. On many accounts I ſhould have rejoiced to have been with you: yet I am ſatisfied that on the whole I was doing beſt at home."

It has been already obſerved, that for a month preceding the deciſion of the Committee, he reſolved to devote one day in every week to ſecret prayer and faſting, and to keep a *diary* of the exerciſes of his mind during the whole of that period. This diary was not ſhown to the Committee at the time, but merely the preceding *narrative*. Since his death a few of them have peruſed it; and have been almoſt ready to think, that if they had ſeen it before, they dared not oppoſe his going. But the Lord hath taken him to himſelf. It no longer remains a queſtion now, whether he ſhall labour in England or in India. A few paſſages, however, from this tranſcript of his heart, while contemplating a great and diſintereſted undertaking, will furniſh a better idea of his character than could be given by any other hand.

"Oct. 8, 1794. Had ſome remarkable freedom and affection this morning, both in family and ſecret prayer. With many tears I dedicated myſelf, body and ſoul, to the ſervice of Jeſus; and earneſtly implored full ſatisfaction reſpecting the path of duty.—I feel a growing deadneſs for all earthly comforts; and derive my happineſs

happineſs immediately from GOD himſelf. May I ſtill endure, as Moſes did, by ſeeing Him who is inviſible!"

"Oct. 10. Enjoyed much freedom to-day in the family. Whilſt noticing in prayer the ſtate of the millions of heathen who know not God, I felt the aggregate value of their immortal ſouls with peculiar energy.

"Afterwards was much ſtruck whilſt (on my knees before God in ſecret) I read the fourth chapter of Micah. The ninth verſe I fancied very applicable to the Church in Cannon-ſtreet: but what reaſon is there for ſuch a cry about ſo inſignificant a worm as I am? The third chapter of Habakkuk too well expreſſes that mixture of *ſolemnity* and *confidence* with which I contemplate the work of the miſſion.

"Whilſt at prayer-meeting to night, I learned more of the meaning of ſome paſſages of ſcripture than ever before. Suitable frames of ſoul are like good lights, in which a painting appears to its full advantage. I had often meditated on Phil. iii. 7, 8, and Gal. vi. 14: but never *felt* crucifixion to the world, and diſeſteem for all that it contains as at that time. All proſpects of pecuniary independence, and growing reputation, with which in unworthier moments I had amuſed myſelf, were now chaſed from my mind; and the deſire of living *wholly* to Chriſt ſwallowed up every other thought. Frowns and ſmiles, fulneſs or want, honour and reproach, were now equally indifferent; and when I concluded the meeting, my whole ſoul felt, as it were, going after the loſt ſheep of Chriſt among the heathen.

"I do feel a growing ſatisfaction in the propoſal of ſpending my whole life in ſomething nobler than the locality of this iſland will admit. I long to raiſe my Maſter's banner in climes where the ſound of his fame hath

hath but ſcarcely reached. He hath ſaid, for my encouragement, that *all* nations ſhall flow unto it.

" The conduct and ſucceſs of Stach, Booniſh, and other Moravian Miſſionaries in Greenland, both confound and ſtimulate me. O Lord, forgive my paſt indolence in thy ſervice, and help me to redeem the reſidue of my days for exertions more worthy a friend of mankind, and a ſervant of God.

" Oct. 13. Being taken up with viſitors the former part of the day, I ſpent the after part in application to the Bengal language, and found the difficulties I apprehended vaniſh as faſt as I encountered them. I read and prayed, prayed and read, and made no ſmall advances. Bleſſed be God!

" Oct. 15. There are in Birmingham 50,000 inhabitants; and, excluſive of the vicinity, ten miniſters who preach the fundamental truths of the goſpel. In Hindoſtan there are twice as many millions of inhabitants; and not ſo many goſpel preachers. Now Jeſus Chriſt hath commanded his miniſters to go into all the world, and preach the goſpel to every creature: Why ſhould we be ſo diſproportionate in our labours? Peculiar circumſtances muſt not be urged againſt poſitive commands: I am therefore bound, if others do not go, to make the means more proportionate to the multitude.

" To-night, reading ſome letters from brother Carey, in which he ſpeaks of his wife's illneſs when ſhe firſt came into the country, I endeavoured to realize myſelf not only with a ſick, but a *dead* wife. The thought was like a cold dagger to my heart at firſt: but on recollection I conſidered that the ſame God ruled in India as in Europe; and that he could either preſerve her, or ſupport me, as well there as here.

My buſineſs is only to be where he would have me. Other things I leave to him. O Lord, though with timidity, yet I hope not without ſatisfaction, I look every poſſible evil in the face, and ſay, *Thy will be done.*

"Oct. 17. This is the firſt day I have ſet apart for extraordinary devotion in relation to my preſent exerciſe of mind. Roſe earlier than uſual, and began the day in prayer that God would be with me in every part of it, and grant that the end I have in view may be clearly aſcertained—the knowledge of his will.

"Conſidering the importance of the work before me, I began at the foundation of all religion, and reviewed the grounds on which I ſtood; the being of a a God, the relation of mankind to him, with the divine inſpiration of the ſcriptures; and the review afforded me great ſatisfaction.* I alſo compared the different religions which claimed divine origin, and found little difficulty in determining which had moſt internal evidence of its divinity. I attentively read and ſeriouſly conſidered Doddridge's three excellent Sermons on the evidences of the Chriſtian Religion, which was followed by ſuch conviction, that I had hardly patience to conclude the book before I fell on my knees before God to bleſs him for ſuch a religion, eſtabliſhed on ſuch a baſis; and I have received more *ſolid* ſatisfaction this day upon the ſubject than ever I did before.

"I alſo

* There is a wide difference between admitting theſe principles in theory, and *making uſe of them.* David might have worn Saul's accoutrements at a parade: but in meeting Goliath he muſt go forth in an armour that had been *tried.* A mariner may ſit in his cabin at his eaſe while the ſhip is in harbour: but ere he undertakes a voyage he muſt examine its ſoundneſs, and whether it will endure the ſtorms which may overtake him.

"I alſo conſidered, ſince the goſpel is true, ſince Chriſt is the head of the church, and his will is the law of all his followers, what are the obligations of his ſervants in reſpect of the enlargement of his kingdom. I here referred to our Lord's commiſſion, which I could not but conſider as univerſal in its object, and permanent in its obligations. I read brother Carey's remarks upon it—and as the command has never been repealed; as there are millions of beings in the world on whom the command may be exerciſed; as I can produce no counter-revelation; and as I lie under no natural impoſſibilities of performing it .... I concluded that I, as a ſervant of Chriſt, was bound by this law.

"I took the narrative of my experience, and ſtatement of my views on this ſubject in my hand, and bowing down before God, I earneſtly beſought an impartial and enlightened ſpirit. I then peruſed that paper; and can now ſay, that I have (allowing for my own fallibility) not one doubt upon the ſubject. I therefore reſolved to cloſe this ſolemn ſeaſon with reading a portion of both Teſtaments, and earneſt prayer to God for my family, my people, the heathen world, the Society, and particularly for the ſucceſs of our dear brethren Thomas and Carey, and his bleſſing, preſence, and grace to be ever my guide and glory. Accordingly I read the xlixth chapter of Iſaiah; and with what ſweetneſs! I never read a chapter in private with ſuch feelings ſince I have been in the miniſtry. The 8, 9, 10, 20, and 21 verſes I thought remarkably ſuitable.

"Read alſo part of the epiſtle to the Epheſians, and the firſt chapter to the Philippians. O that for *me* to live may be *Chriſt* alone! Bleſſed be my dear Saviour, in prayer I have had ſuch fellowſhip with him, as would warm me in Greenland, comfort me in New-Zealand,

Zealand, and rejoice me in the valley of the ſhadow of death!

"Oct. 18. I dreamed that I ſaw one of the Chriſtian Hindoos. O how I loved him! I long to realize my dream. How pleaſant will it be to ſit down at the Lord's table with our black brethren, and hear Jeſus preached in their language. Surely then will come to paſs the ſaying that is written, In Chriſt there is neither Jew nor Greek, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free, all are ONE in him.

"Have been happy to-day in completing the manuſcript of Periodical Accounts, No. I. Any thing relative to the ſalvation of the heathen brings a certain pleaſure with it. I find I cannot pray, nor converſe, nor read, nor ſtudy, nor preach with ſatisfaction without reference to this ſubject.

"Oct. 20. Was a little diſcouraged on reading Mr. Zeigenbald's conferences with the Malabarians, till I recollected, what ought to be ever preſent to my mind in brother Carey's words,—*The work is God's.*

"In the evening I found ſome little difficulty with the language; but conſidering how merchants and captains overcome this difficulty for the ſake of wealth, I ſat confounded before the Lord that I ſhould ever have indulged ſuch a thought; and looking up to him, I ſet about it with cheerfulneſs, and found that I was making a ſenſible advance, although I can never apply till 11 o'clock at night, on account of my other duties.*

"Preached

* Night ſtudies, often continued till two or three o'clock in the morning, it is to be feared, were the firſt occaſion of impairing Mr. Pearce's health, and brought on that train of nervous ſenſations with which

"Preached from 2 Kings iv. 26, *It is well.* Was much enlarged both in thought and expreſſion. Whilſt ſpeaking of the ſatisfaction enjoyed by a truly pious mind, when it feels itſelf in all circumſtances and times in the hand of *a good God*, I felt, that were the univerſe deſtroyed, and I the only being in it, beſide God, HE is fully adequate to my complete happineſs; and had I been in an African wood, ſurrounded with venomous ſerpents, devouring beaſts, and ſavage men, in ſuch a frame, I ſhould be the ſubject of perfect peace and exalted joy. Yes, O my God, thou haſt taught me that THOU ALONE art worthy of my confidence; and with this ſentiment fixed in my heart, I am free from all ſolicitude about any temporal proſpects or concerns. If *thy* preſence be enjoyed, poverty ſhall be riches, darkneſs light, affliction proſperity, reproach my honour, and fatigue my reſt: and thou haſt ſaid, *My preſence ſhall go with thee.* Enough, Lord, I aſk for nothing, nothing more.

"But how ſad the proofs of our depravity; and how inſecure the beſt frames we enjoy! Returning home, a wicked expreſſion from a perſon who paſſed me, caught my ear, and occurred ſo often to my thoughts for ſome minutes as to bring guilt upon my mind, and overwhelm me with ſhame before God. But I appealed to God for my hatred of all ſuch things, ſecretly confeſſed the ſin of my heart, and again ventured to the mercy-ſeat. On ſuch occaſions how precious a Mediator is to the ſoul.

which he was afterwards afflicted. Though not much accuſtomed to converſe on this ſubject, he once acknowledged to a brother in the miniſtry, that, owing to his enervated ſtate, he ſometimes dreaded the approach of public ſervices to ſuch a degree, that he would rather have ſubmitted to ſtripes than engage in them; and that while in the pulpit, he was frequently diſtreſſed with the apprehenſion of falling over it.

" Oct. 22. I did not for the former part of the day feel my wonted ardour for the work of a Miſſionary; but rather an inclination to conſult fleſh and blood, and look at the worſt ſide of things. I did ſo: but when on my knees before God in prayer about it, I firſt conſidered that my judgment was ſtill equally ſatisfied, and my conſcience ſo convinced, that I durſt not relinquiſh the work for a thouſand worlds! And then I thought that this dull frame had not been without its uſe; as I was now fully convinced, that my deſire to go did not ariſe from any fluctuation of inconſtant paſſions, but the ſettled convictions of my judgment. I therefore renewed my vows unto the Lord, that let what difficulties ſoever be in the way, I would (provided the Society approved) ſurmount them all. I felt a kind of unutterable ſatisfaction of mind, in my reſolution of leaving the deciſion in the hands of my brethren. May God rightly diſpoſe their hearts! I have no doubt but he will.

" Oct. 23. Have found a little time to apply to the Bengallee language. How pleaſant it is to work for God! Love transforms thorns to roſes, and makes pain itſelf a pleaſure. I never ſat down to any ſtudy with ſuch peculiar and continued ſatisfaction. The thought of exalting the Redeemer in this language, is a ſpur to my application paramount to every diſcouragement for want of a living tutor. I have paſſed this day with an abiding ſatisfaction reſpecting my preſent views.

" Oct. 24. O for the enlightening, enlivening, and ſanctifying preſence of God to-day! It is the *ſecond* of thoſe days of extraordinary devotion which I have ſet apart for ſeeking God, in relation to the Miſſion. How ſhall I ſpend it? I will devote the morning to prayer, reading, and meditation; and the afternoon to viſiting the wretched, and relieving the needy.

needy. May God accept my ſervices, guide me by his counſel, and employ me for his praiſe!

"Having beſought the Lord that he would not ſuffer me to deceive myſelf in ſo important a matter as that which I had now retired to conſider, and exerciſed ſome confidence that he would be the rewarder of thoſe who diligently ſeek him, I read the 119th Pſalm at the concluſion of my prayer, and felt and wondered at the congruity of ſo many of the verſes to the breathings of my own heart. Often, with holy admiration, I pauſed, and read, and thought, and prayed over the verſe again, eſpecially verſes 20, 31, 59, 60, 112, 145, 146. *My ſoul breaketh for the longing that it hath unto thy judgments at all times. I have ſtuck unto thy teſtimonies: O Lord, put me not to ſhame.*

"Moſt of the morning I ſpent in ſeriouſly reading Mr. Horne's *Letters on Miſſions*, having firſt begged of the Lord to make the peruſal profitable to my inſtruction in the path of duty. To the interrogation, 'Which of you will forſake all, deny himſelf, take up his croſs, and, if God pleaſes, die for his religion?' I replied ſpontaneouſly, Bleſſed be God, I am willing! Lord, help me to accompliſh it!

"Cloſed this ſeaſon with reading the 61ſt and 62d chapters of Iſaiah, and prayer for the Church of God at large, my own congregation, the heathens, the Society, brethren Thomas and Carey, all Miſſionaries whom God hath ſent of every denomination, my own caſe, my wife and family, and for aſſiſtance in my work.

"The after part of this day has been gloomy indeed. All the painful circumſtances which can attend my going have met upon my heart, and formed a load almoſt inſupportable. A number of things, which

which have been some time accumulating, have united their pressure, and made me groan being burdened. Whilst at a prayer-meeting I looked round on my christian friends, and said to myself, A few months more and probably I shall leave you all! But in the deepest of my gloom, I resolved though faint yet to pursue, not doubting but my Lord would give me strength equal to the day.

"I had scarcely formed this resolution before it occurred, My Lord and Master was a man of sorrows. Oppressed, and covered with blood, he cried, *If it be possible, let this cup pass from me.* Yet in the depth of his agonies he added, *Thy will be done.* This thought was to me what the sight of the cross was to Bunyan's pilgrim; I lost my burden. Spent the remainder of the meeting in sweet communion with God.

"But on coming home, the sight of Mrs. P. replaced my load. She had for some time been much discouraged at the thoughts of going. I therefore felt reluctant to say any thing on this subject, thinking it would be unpleasant to her: but though I strove to conceal it, an involuntary sigh betrayed my uneasiness. She kindly inquired the cause. I avoided at first an explanation, till she, guessing the reason, said to this effect—'I hope you will be no more uneasy on *my* account. For the last two or three days, I have been more comfortable than ever in the thought of going. I have considered the steps you are pursuing to know the mind of God, and I think you cannot take more proper ones. When you consult the ministers, you should represent your obstacles as strongly as your inducements; and then, if they advise your going, though the parting from my friends will be almost insupportable, yet I will make myself as happy as I can, and God can make me happy any where.'

"Should

" Should this little Diary fall into the hands of a man having the ſoul of a Miſſionary, circumſtanced as I am, he will be the only man capable of ſharing my peace, my joy, my gratitude, my rapture of ſoul. Thus at evening tide it is light ; thus God brings his people through fire and through water into a wealthy place ; thus thoſe who aſk do receive, and their joy is full. O love the Lord, ye his ſaints : there is no want to them that fear him !

" Oct. 26. Had much enlargement this morning, whilſt ſpeaking on the nature, extent and influence of divine love : what deſigns it formed—with what energy it acted—with what perſeverance it purſued its object—what obſtacles it ſurmounted—what difficulties it conquered—and what ſweetneſs it imparted under the heavieſt loads, and ſevereſt trials. Almoſt through the day I enjoyed a very deſirable frame, and on coming home, my wife and I had ſome converſation on the ſubject of my going. She ſaid, Though in general the thought was painful ; yet there were ſome ſeaſons when ſhe had no preference, but felt herſelf diſpoſed to go or ſtay, as the Lord ſhould direct.

" This day wrote to brother Fuller, briefly ſtating my deſires, requeſting his advice, and propoſing a meeting of the Committee on the buſineſs. I feel great ſatisfaction ariſing from my leaving the matter to the determination of my honoured brethren, and *to God* through them.

" Oct. 27. To-day I ſent a packet to our brethren in India. I could not forbear telling brother Carey all my feelings, views, and expectations : but without ſaying I ſhould be entirely governed by the opinion of the Society.

" Oct.

"Oct. 28. Still panting to preach Jesus among my fellow sinners to whom he is yet unknown. Wrote to Dr. Rogers, of Philadelphia, to-day upon the subject with freedom and warmth, and inquired whether, whilst the people of the United States were forming societies to encourage arts, liberty, and emigration, there could not a few be found among them who would form a society for the transmission of the word of life to the benighted heathens; or in case that could not be, whether they might not strengthen our hands in Europe, by some benevolent proof of concurring with us in a design, which they speak of with such approbation? With this I sent *Horne's Letters*. I will follow both with my prayers, and who can tell?

"Oct. 29. Looked over the *Code of Hindoo Laws* to-day. How much is there to admire in it, founded on the principles of justice. The most salutary regulations are adopted in many circumstances. But what a pity that so much excellence should be abused by laws to establish or countenance idolatry, magic, prostitution, prayers for the dead, false-witnessing, theft, and suicide. How perfect is the morality of the gospel of Jesus; and how desirable that they should embrace it. Ought not means to be used? Can we assist them too soon? There is reason to think that their Shasters were penned about the beginning of the Kollee Jogue, which must be soon after the deluge: and are not 4000 years long enough for 100 millions of men to be under the empire of the devil?

"Oct. 31. I am encouraged to enter upon this day (which I set apart for supplicating God) by a recollection of his promises to those who seek him. If the sacred word be true, the servants of God can never seek his face in vain; and as I am conscious of my sincerity and earnest desire only to know his pleasure

ure that I may perform it, I find a degree of confidence that I shall realize the fulfilment of the word on which he causeth me to hope.

" Began the day with solemn prayer for the assistance of the Holy Spirit in my present exercise, that so I might enjoy the spirit and power of prayer, and have my personal religion improved, as well as my public steps directed. In this duty I found a little quickening.

" I then read over the narrative of my experience, and my journal. I find my views are still the same; but my heart is much more established than when I began to write.

" Was much struck in reading Paul's words in 2 Cor. i. 17, when after speaking of his purpose to travel for the preaching of the gospel, he saith, *Did I then use lightness when I was thus minded? Or the things that I purpose, do I purpose according to the flesh, that with me there should be yea yea, nay nay?* The *piety* of the apostle in not purposing after the flesh, the *seriousness* of spirit with which he formed his designs, and his stedfast adherence to them, were in my view worthy of the highest admiration and strictest imitation.

" Thinking that I might get some assistance from David *Brainerd's* experience, I read his life to the time of his being appointed a Missionary among the Indians. The exalted devotion of that dear man almost made me question mine. Yet at some seasons he speaks of sinking as well as rising. His singular piety excepted, his feelings, prayers, desires, comforts, hopes, and sorrows are my own; and if I could follow him in nothing else, I knew I had been enabled to say this with him, 'I feel exceedingly calm, and quite resigned to God respecting my future improvement (or station)

when

when and *where* he pleased. My faith lifted me above the world, and removed all those mountains, which I could not look over of late. I thought I wanted not the favour of man to lean upon; for I knew God's favour was infinitely better, and that it was no matter *where* or *when*, or *how* Christ should send me, nor with what trials he should still exercise me, if I might be prepared for his work and will.'

"Read the ii. iii. iv. v. and vi. chapters of the second epistle to the Corinthians. Felt a kind of placidity, but not much joy. On beginning the concluding prayer, I had no strength to wrestle, nor power with God at all. I seemed as one desolate and forsaken. I prayed for myself, the Society, the Missionaries, the converted Hindoos, the church in Cannon-street, my family, and ministry; but yet all was dulness, and I feared I had offended the Lord. I felt but little zeal for the mission, and was about to conclude with a lamentation over the hardness of my heart; when of a sudden it pleased God to smite the rock with the rod of his Spirit, and immediately the waters began to flow. O what a heavenly, glorious, melting power was it. My eyes, almost closed with weeping, hardly suffer me to write. I feel it over again. O what a view of the love of a crucified Redeemer did I enjoy: the attractions of his cross how powerful! I was as a giant refreshed with new wine, as to my animation; like Mary at the Master's feet weeping, for tenderness of soul; like a little child, for submission to my heavenly Father's will; and like Paul, for a victory over all self-love, and creature-love, and fear of man, when these things stand in the way of my duty. The interest that Christ took in the redemption of the heathen, the situation of our brethren in Bengal, the worth of the soul, and the plain command of Jesus Christ, together with an irresistible drawing of soul, which by far exceeded any thing I

ever

ever felt before, and is impossible to be described to or conceived of by those who have never experienced it; all compelled me to *vow* that I would, by his leave, serve him among the heathen. The bible lying open before me (upon my knees) many passages caught my eye, and confirmed the purposes of my heart. If ever in my life I knew any thing of the influences of the Holy Spirit, I did at this time. I was swallowed up in God. Hunger, fulness, cold, heat, friends and enemies, all seemed nothing before God. I was in a new world. All was delightful; for Christ was all, and in all. Many times I concluded prayer, but when rising from my knees, communion with God was so desirable, that I was sweetly drawn to it again and again, till my animal strength was almost exhausted. Then I thought it would be pleasure to *burn* for God.

"And now while I write, such a heavenly sweetness fills my soul, that no exterior circumstances can remove it; and I do uniformly feel, that the more I am thus, the more I pant for the service of my blessed Jesus among the heathen. Yes, my dear, my dying Lord, I am thine, thy servant; and if I neglect the service of so good a master, I may well expect a guilty conscience in life, and a death awful as that of Judas or of Spira!

"This evening I had a meeting with my friends. Returned much dejected. Reviewed a letter from brother Fuller, which, though he says he has many objections to my going, yet is so affectionately expressed as to yield me a gratification.

"Nov. 3. This evening received a letter from brother Ryland, containing many objections: but contradiction itself is pleasant when it is the voice of judgment mingled with affection. I wish to remember that *I may be mistaken*, though I cannot say I am

at present convinced that it is so. I am happy to find that brother Ryland approves of my referring it to the Committee. I have much confidence in the judgment of my brethren, and hope I shall be perfectly satisfied with their advice. I do think, however, if they knew how earnestly I pant for the work, it would be impossible for them to withhold their ready acquiescence. O Lord, thou knowest my sincerity; and that if I go not to the work it will not be owing to any reluctance on my part! If I stay in England, I fear I shall be a poor useless drone; or if a sense of duty prompt me to activity, I doubt whether I shall ever know inward peace and joy again. O Lord, I am, thou knowest I am, *oppressed*; undertake for me!

"Nov. 5. At times to-day I have been reconciled to the thought of staying if any brethren should so advise; but at other times I seem to think I could not. I look at brother Carey's portrait as it hangs in my study, I love him in the bowels of Jesus Christ, and long to join his labours: every look calls up a hundred thoughts, all of which inflame my desire to be a fellow-labourer with him in the work of the Lord. One thing, however, I have resolved upon, that, the Lord keeping me, if I cannot go abroad, I will do all I can to serve the mission at home.

"Nov. 7. This is the last day of peculiar devotion before the deciding meeting. May I have strength to wrestle with God to-day for his wisdom to preside in the Committee, and by faith to leave the issue to their determination.

"I did not enjoy much enlargement in prayer to-day. My mind seems at present incapable of those sensations of joy with which I have lately been much indulged, through its struggling in relation to my going or staying: yet I have been enabled to commit the

the iſſue into the hands of God, as he may direct my brethren, hoping that their advice will be agreeable to his will."

The reſult of the Committee Meeting has already been related; together with the ſtate of his mind, as far as could be collected from his letters, for ſome time after it. The termination of theſe tender and intereſting exerciſes, and of all his other labours, in ſo ſpeedy a removal from the preſent ſcene of action, may teach us not to draw any certain concluſion as to the deſigns of God concerning our future labours, from the ardour or ſincerity of our feelings. He may take it well that *it was in our hearts to build him an houſe*, though he ſhould for wiſe reaſons have determined not to gratify us. Suffice it, that in matters of EVERLASTING MOMENT he has engaged to *perfect that which concerns us.* In this he hath condeſcended to bind himſelf, as by an oath, for our conſolation; here therefore we may ſafely conſider our ſpiritual deſires as indicative of his deſigns: but it is otherwiſe in various inſtances with regard to preſent duty.

CHAP. III.

HIS EXERCISES AND LABOURS, FROM THE TIME OF HIS GIVING UP THE IDEA OF GOING ABROAD, TO THE COMMENCEMENT OF HIS LAST AFFLICTION.

HAD the multiplied labours of this excellent man permitted his keeping a regular diary, we may see by the foregoing specimen of a single month, what a rich store of truly Christian experience would have pervaded these Memoirs. We should then have been better able to trace the gradual openings of his holy mind, and the springs of that extraordinary unction of spirit, and energy of action, by which his life was distinguished. As it is, we can only collect a few gleanings, partly from memory, and partly from letters communicated by his friends.

This chapter will include a period of about four years, during which he went twice to London to collect for the *Baptist Mission*, and once he visited Dublin, at the invitation of the *Evangelical Society* in that city.

There appears throughout the general tenor of his life, a singular submissiveness to the will of God; and what is worthy of notice, this disposition was generally most conspicuous when his own will was most counteracted. The justness of this remark is sufficiently apparent from his letter to Mrs. Pearce, of Nov. 13, 1794,* after the decision of the Committee; and the same spirit was carried into the common concerns of life. Thus, about a month afterwards, when his dear Louisa was ill of a fever, he thus writes from Northampton to Mrs. Pearce:—

" *December*

* See page 49.

" *December* 13, 1794.

" My dear Sarah,

" I AM juſt brought on the wings of celeſtial mercy ſafe to my Sabbath's ſtation. I am well; and my dear friends here ſeem healthy and happy: but I feel for *you*. I long to know how our dear Louiſa's pulſe beats: I fear ſtill feveriſh. We muſt not, however, ſuffer ourſelves to be infected with a mental fever on this account. Is ſhe ill? It is right. Is ſhe very ill . . . . dying? It is ſtill right. Is ſhe gone to join the heavenly choriſters? It is all right, notwithſtanding our repinings——Repinings! no; we will not repine. It is beſt ſhe ſhould go. It is beſt for *her*. This we muſt allow. It is beſt for *us*. Do we expect it? O what poor, ungrateful, ſhort-ſighted worms are we! Let us ſubmit, my Sarah, till we come to heaven: if we do not *then* ſee that it is beſt, let us then complain. But why do I attempt to conſole? Perhaps an indulgent Providence has ere now diſſipated your fears: or if that ſame *kind Providence* has removed our babe, you have conſolation enough in Him who ſuffered more than we; and more than enough to quiet all our paſſions, in that aſtoniſhing conſideration,—'*God* ſo loved the world, that he *ſpared not* his own Son.' Did GOD cheerfully give the holy child JESUS for us: and ſhall we refuſe our child to Him! He gave his Son to *ſuffer*: He takes our children to *enjoy*: Yes; to enjoy *Himſelf*.

Yours, with the tendereſt regard,

S. P."

In June, 1795, he attended the Aſſociation at Kettering, partly on account of ſome miſſionary buſineſs there to be tranſacted. That was a ſeaſon of great

joy to many, especially the last forenoon previous to parting. From thence he wrote to Mrs. Pearce as follows :—

"From a pew in the house of God at Kettering, with my cup of joy running over, I address you by the hands of brother Simmons. Had it pleased Divine Providence to have permitted your accompanying me, my pleasures would have received no small addition ; because I should have hoped that you would have been filled with similar consolation, and have received equal edification by the precious means of grace on which I have attended. Indeed, I never remember to have enjoyed a public meeting to such a high degree since I have been in the habit of attending upon them. Oh that I may return to you, and the dear church of God, in the *fulness* of the blessing of the gospel of Christ ! I hope, my beloved, that you are not without the enjoyment of the sweetness and the supports of the blessed gospel. Oh that you may get and keep near to God, and in *Him* find infinitely more than you can possibly lose by your husband's absence !

"Mr. Hall preached, last evening, from 1 Pet. i. 8. A most evangelical and experimental season ! I was charmed and warmed. Oh that Jesus may go on to reveal himself to him as altogether lovely ! I am unable to write more now. To-day I set off for Northampton, and preach there to-night. The Lord bless you !"

In July, 1795, he received a pressing invitation from the *General Evangelical Society* in Dublin, to pay them a visit, and to assist in diffusing the gospel of the grace of God in that kingdom. To this invitation he replied in the following letter, addressed to Dr. Mc. *Dowal* :—

"*Birmingham,*

"*Birmingham, Auguſt* 3, 1795.

"Rev. and dear Sir,

"I RECEIVED your favour of the 22d. ult. and for the intereſting reaſon you aſſign, tranſmit a 'ſpeedy anſwer.' The Society, on whoſe behalf you wrote, I have ever conſidered with the reſpect due to the real friends of the beſt of cauſes—The cauſe of God and of his Chriſt: a cauſe which embraces the moſt important and durable intereſts of our fellow men: and your name, dear ſir, I have been taught to hold in more than common eſteem by my dear brother and father, Meſſrs. Birt and Francis. The benevolent inſtitution which you are engaged in ſupporting, I am perſuaded, deſerves more than the good wiſhes or prayers of your brethren in the kingdom and patience of Jeſus, on this ſide the channel; and it will yield me ſubſtantial pleaſure to afford perſonal aſſiſtance in your pious labours. But, for the preſent, I am ſorry to ſay, I muſt decline your propoſal; being engaged to ſpend a month in London this autumn, on the buſineſs of our *Miſſion Society*, of which you have probably heard.

"When I formed my preſent connexions with the church in Birmingham, I propoſed an annual freedom for ſix weeks, from my paſtoral duties; and ſhould the 'Evangelical Society' expreſs a wiſh for my ſervices the enſuing year, I am perfectly inclined, God willing, to ſpend that time beneath their direction, and at what part of the year they conceive a viſit would be moſt ſerviceable to the good deſign. I only requeſt, that ſhould this be their deſire, I may receive the information as ſoon as they can conveniently decide, that I may withhold myſelf from other engagements, which may interfere with the time they may appoint. I entreat you to make my Chriſtian reſpects acceptable to the gentlemen who compoſe the Society,

ty, and assure yourself that I am, dear sir, respectfully and affectionately,

Your brother, in our Lord Jesus,

S. P."

The invitation was repeated, and he complied with their request, engaging to go over in the month of June, 1796.

A little before this journey, it occurred to Dr. Ryland, that an itinerating mission into Cornwall might be of use to the cause of true religion, and that two acceptable ministers might be induced to undertake it; and that if executed during the vacation at the Bristol Academy, two of the students might supply their place. He communicated his thoughts to Mr. Pearce, who wrote thus in answer :—

" *May* 30, 1796.

" My very dear Brother,

" I THANK you a thousand times for your last letter. Blessed be God, who hath put it into your heart to propose such a plan for increasing the boundaries of Zion. I have read your letter to our wisest friends here, and they heard it with great joy. The plan ; the place ; the mode ; the persons ; all, *all* meet our most affectionate wishes. How did such a scheme never enter our minds before ! Alas, we have nothing in our hearts that is worth having, save what God puts there. Do write to me when at Dublin, and tell me whether it be resolved on ; when they set out, &c. ? I hope ere long to hear, that as many disciples are employed in Great-Britain, as the Saviour employed in Judea. When he gives the word, great will be the company of the preachers.

" Oh,

"Oh, my dear brother, let us go on ſtill praying, contriving, labouring, defending, until 'the little leaven leaveneth the whole lump, and the ſmall ſtone from the mountain fill the whole earth.'

"What pleaſures do thoſe loſe who have no intereſt in God's gracious and holy cauſe! How thankful ſhould we be, that we are not ſtrangers to the joy which the friends of Zion feel when the Lord turneth again Zion's captivity. I am, beyond expreſſion,

Your affectionate brother in Chriſt,

S. P."

On May 31 he ſet off for Dublin, and "the Lord proſpered his way, ſo that he arrived at the time appointed; and from every account it appears, that he was not only ſent *in the fullneſs of the bleſſing of the goſpel of peace*, but that the Lord himſelf went with him. His preaching was not only highly acceptable to every claſs of hearers, but the word came from him with power, and there is abundant reaſon to believe, that many will through eternity praiſe God for ſending his meſſage to them by this dear ambaſſador of Chriſt. His memory lives in their hearts, and they join with the other churches of Chriſt in deploring the loſs they have ſuſtained by his death.

"He was earneſtly ſolicited by the *Evangelical Society* to renew his viſit to that kingdom in 1798. Ready to embrace every call of duty, he had ſignified his compliance; and the time was fixed: but the breaking out of the late rebellion prevented him from realizing his intention. This was a painful diſappointment to many, who wiſhed once more to ſee his face, and to have heard the glad tidings from his lips."

Such

Such is the brief account of his visit to Dublin, given by Dr. Mc. Dowal. The following letter was written to Mrs. Pearce, when he had been there a little more than a week :—

" *Dublin, June* 31, 1796.

" I LONG to know how you do, and you will be as much concerned to know how I go on at this distance from you. I haste to satisfy your inquiries.

" I am in perfect health : am delightfully disappointed with the place, and its inhabitants. I am very thankful that I came over. I have found much more religion here already than I expected to meet with during the whole of my stay. The prospect of usefulness is flattering. I have already many more friends (I hope *Christian* friends) than I can gratify by visits. Many doors are open for preaching the gospel in the city ; and my country excursions will probably be few. Thus much for outline.

" But you will like to know how I spend my time, &c. Well then : I am at the house of a Mr. H——, late High-Sheriff for the city : a gentleman of opulence, respectability, and evangelical piety. He is by profession a Calvinistic presbyterian ; an elder of Dr. Mc. Dowal's church ; has a most amiable wife, and four children. I am very thankful for being placed here during my stay. I am quite at home, I mean as to ease and familiarity ; for as to *style* of living, I neither do, nor desire to equal it. Yet in my present situation it is convenient. It would, however, be sickening and dull, had I not a GOD to go to, to converse with, to enjoy, and to call *my own*. Oh, 'tis this, *'tis this*, my dearest Sarah, which gives a point to every enjoyment, and sweetens all the cup of life.

" The

"The Lord's day after I wrote to you laſt, I preached for Dr. Mc. Dowal in the morning at half paſt eleven; heard a Mr. Kilburne at five; and preached again at Plunket-ſtreet at ſeven. On Tueſday evening I preached at an hoſpital, and on Thurſday evening at Plunket-ſtreet again. Yeſterday, for the Baptiſts in the morning, Dr. Mc. Dowal at five, and at Plunket-ſtreet at ſeven.

"The hours of worſhip will appear ſingular to you: they depend on the uſual *meal* times. We breakfaſt at ten; dine between four and five, ſometimes between five and ſix; take tea from ſeven to nine; and ſup from ten to twelve.

"I thank God that I poſſeſs an abiding determination to aim at the *conſciences* of the people in every diſcourſe. I have borne the moſt poſitive teſtimony againſt the prevailing evils of profeſſors here:—as, ſenſuality, gaiety, vain amuſements, neglect of the Sabbath, &c.; and laſt night, told an immenſe crowd of profeſſors of the firſt rank, 'that if they made cuſtom and faſhion their plea, they were awfully deluding their ſouls; for it had always been the faſhion to inſult God, to diſſipate time, and to purſue the broad road to hell; but it would not leſſen their torments there, that the way to damnation was the faſhion.'

"I expected my faithfulneſs would have given them offence; but I am perſuaded it was the way to pleaſe the Lord, and thoſe whom I expected would be enemies, are not only at peace with me, but even renounce their ſenſual indulgencies to attend on my miniſtry. I do aſſuredly believe that God hath ſent me hither for good. The five o'clock meetings are miſerably attended in general. In a houſe that will hold 1,500, or 2,000 people, you will hardly ſee above fifty! Yeſterday morning I preached on the ſubject of *public*

lic worſhip, from Pſalm v. 7, and ſeriouſly warned them againſt preferring their bellies to God, and their own houſes to his. I was delighted and ſurpriſed, at the five o'clock meeting to ſee the place nearly full. Surely this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in my eyes. Never, never did I more feel how weak I am in myſelf,—a mere nothing; and how ſtrong I am in the omnipotence of God. I feel a ſuperiority to all fear, and poſſeſs a conſcious dignity in being the ambaſſador of God. Oh help me to praiſe, for it is he alone who teacheth my hands to war, and my fingers to fight: and ſtill pray for me; for if he withdraw for a moment, I become as weak and unprofitable as the briars of the wilderneſs.

"You cannot think how much I am ſupported by the aſſurance that I have left a *praying people* at Birmingham; and I believe, that in anſwer to their prayers I have hitherto been wonderfully aſſiſted in my public work, as well as enjoyed much in private devotion.

"I have formed a moſt pleaſing acquaintance with ſeveral ſerious young men in the Univerſity here, and with two of the fellows of the College; moſt pious gentlemen indeed, who have undergone a world of reproach for Chriſt and his goſpel, and have been forbidden to preach in the churches by the Archbiſhop: but God has raiſed another houſe for them here, where they preach with much ſucceſs, and have begun a meeting in the College, which promiſes freſh proſperity to the cauſe of Jeſus."

The following particulars, in addition to the above, are taken partly from ſome notes in his own hand writing, and partly from the account given by his friend, Mr. Summers, who accompanied him during the latter part of his viſits.

At

At his firſt arrival, the congregations were but thinly attended, and the Baptiſt congregation in particular, amongſt whom he delivered ſeveral diſcourſes. It much affected him to ſee the whole city given to ſenſuality and worldly conformity; and eſpecially to find thoſe of his own denomination amongſt the loweſt, and leaſt affected with their condition. But the longer he continued, the more the congregations increaſed, and every opportunity became increaſingly intereſting, both to him and them. His faithful remonſtrances, and earneſt recommendations of prayer-meetings to his Baptiſt friends, though at firſt apparently ill received, were well taken in the end; and he had the happineſs to ſee in them ſome hopeful appearances of a return to God. On June the 20th he wrote to his friend, Mr. Summers, as follows:—

"My dear friend,

"IF you mean to abide by my opinion, I ſay, Come to Dublin, and come directly! I have been moſt delightfully diſappointed. I expected darkneſs, and behold, light; ſorrow, and I have had cauſe for abundant joy. I thank God that I came hither, and hope that many, as well as myſelf, will have cauſe to praiſe him. Never have I been more deeply taught my own nothingneſs: never hath the power of God more evidently reſted upon me. The harveſt here is great indeed; and the Lord of the harveſt hath enabled me to labour in it with delight.

'I praiſe him for all that is paſt;
I truſt him for all that's to come.'

"The Lord hath of late been doing great things for Dublin. Several of the young men in the college have been awakened; and two of the *fellows* are ſweet evangelical preachers. One of them is of a ſpirit ſerene as the ſummer evening, and ſweet as the

breath of May. I am already intimate with them, and have ſpent ſeveral mornings in college with various ſtudents, who bid fair to be faithful watchmen on Jeruſalem's walls. But I hope you will come; and then you will ſee for yourſelf. If not, I will give you ſome pleaſant details when we meet in England.

S. P."

Mr. Summers complied with this invitation; and of the laſt ſeven or eight days of Mr. Pearce's continuance at Dublin, he himſelf thus writes:—

"Monday, July 4. At three in the afternoon I went with my friend, Mr. Summers, to Mr. K——'s. Spent a very agreeable day. Miſs A. K—— remarked two wonders in Dublin:—a praying ſociety compoſed of ſtudents at college, and another of lawyers. The family were called together. We ſung: I read, and expounded the xii. of Iſaiah; and prayed.—At ſeven we went to a prayer meeting at Plunket-ſtreet: very large attendance. Mr. R—— and Mr. S—— prayed, and I ſpoke from Rom. x. 12, 13. *There is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the ſame Lord over all is rich unto all who call upon him. For whoſoever ſhall call upon the name of the Lord, ſhall be ſaved.*—Many ſeemed affected.—After I had cloſed the opportunity, I told them ſome of my own experience, and requeſted, that if any preſent wiſhed for converſation, they would come to me, either that evening, or on Thurſday evening in the veſtry.—Five perſons came in:—one had been long impreſſed with religion, but could never ſummons courage enough to open her heart before. Another, a Miſs W——, attributed her firſt impreſſions, under God, to my miniſtry; and told me that her father had regularly attended

attended of late, and that her mother was so much alarmed as to be almost in despair. Poor girl! she seemed truly in earnest about her own soul, and as much concerned for her parents.—The next had possessed a serious concern for some time, and of late had been much revived.—One young lady, a Miss H——, staid in the meeting-house, exceedingly affected indeed. Mr. K—— spoke to her—She said, she would speak with me on Thursday.

"Tuesday, 5th. Went to Leiſlip. At seven—preached to a large and affected auditory.

"Wednesday, 6th. Mr. H—— and myself went to Mrs. Mc. G——, to inquire about the young lady who was so much affected at the meeting. Mrs. Mc. G—— said, her mother and sister were pious; that she had been very giddy; but that last Lord's day she was seriously awakened to a sense of sin; had expressed her delight in religion, and fled for refuge to the blood of Jesus.—Her sister was introduced to me; a sweetly pious lady.—I agreed to wait for an interview with the young lady at Mr. H——'s, in Eccles-street, to-morrow.

"Thursday, 7th. Miss H——, her sister, and Mrs. Mc. G——, came to Eccles-street.—A most delightful interview. Seldom have I seen such proficiency in so short a time.—That day week, at Plunket-street, she received her first serious impressions. Her concern deepened at Mass Lane, on Lord's-day morning—more so in the evening at Plunket-street—but most of all on Monday night.—I exhorted them to begin a prayer and experience meeting; and they agreed. Blessed be God! this strengthens my hands greatly.—At seven o'clock, preached at Plunket-street, from Jer. l. 4, 5. *Going and weeping—they shall ask the way to Zion with their faces thitherward.*—A full house;

houſe ; and an impreſſive ſeaſon. Tarried after the public ſervices were ended, to converſe on religion. The moſt pleaſing caſe was a young man of Mr. D——'s.

" Saturday, 9th. Went with my friend, Mr. S——, to call on Miſs H——. Found her at her mother's—We firſt paſſed the door—She ran out after us—Seemed happy ; but agitated. Ran, and called her mother—Soon we ſaw the door of the parlour open, and a majeſtic lady appeared ; who, as ſhe entered the room, thus accoſted me :—' Who art thou, oh bleſſed of the Lord ? Welcome to the widow's houſe ! Accept the widow's thanks for coming after the child whom thou haſt begotten in the goſpel !'—I was too much overcome to do more than take by the hand the aged ſaint. A ſolemn ſilence enſued for a minute or two ; when the old lady recovering, expreſſed the fulneſs of her ſatisfaction reſpecting the reality of the change effected in her daughter, and her gratitude for great refreſhment of her own ſoul, by means of my poor labours. She ſaid, ſhe had known the Lord during forty years, being called under the miniſtry of John Fiſher, in the open air, when on a viſit to an officer who was her brother-in-law. She told us much of her experience, and promiſed to encourage the prayer-meeting, which I propoſed to be held in her houſe every Lord's day evening. They are to begin to-morrow, after preaching.—It was a pleaſant meeting ; and we returned with pleaſure to Eccles-ſtreet. After we roſe up to come away, the old lady affectionately ſaid, ' May the good will of Him who dwelt in the buſh attend you wherever you go, forever and ever !"

The young lady ſome months after wrote to Mr. S——, and ſays, amongſt other things,—" I have great reaſon to be thankful for the many bleſſings the Lord

Lord has been pleaſed to beſtow upon me, and in particular for his ſending Mr. *Pearce* to this city; and that through his means I have been convinced of ſin. I am happy to inform you, that through grace I am enabled to walk in the narrow path. The Lord has taken away all deſire for worldly company; all my deſires now are to attend on the means of grace. Bleſſed be his name, I often find him preſent in them. My mother and I often remember the happy time we ſpent in your company at our houſe. She often ſpeaks of it with great pleaſure, and bleſſes the Lord for the change which grace has wrought in me."

"Lord's-day, 10th. (The laſt Sabbath.) Preached in the morning at Mary's abbey, from Job xxxiii. 27, 28. *He looketh upon men, and if any ſay, I have ſinned, and perverted that which was right, and it profited me not; he will deliver his ſoul from going into the pit, and his life ſhall ſee the light.*—A happy ſeaſon.—In the afternoon, having dined with Mr. W——, he took me to Swift's alley, the Baptiſt place of worſhip, where I gave an exhortation on brotherly love, and adminiſtered the Lord's ſupper. At Mr. W——'s motion, the church requeſted me to look out a ſuitable miniſter for them.—In the evening, I preached at Plunket-ſtreet, from 2 Tim. i. 18. *The Lord grant unto him that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day!*—A very ſolemn ſeaſon.

"Monday, 11th. Met the dear Chriſtian friends, for the laſt time, at a prayer-meeting in Plunket-ſtreet.—The Lord was there!—Several friends ſpent the evening with us afterwards at Mr. H——'s.

"Tueſday, 12th. Went aboard at four; arrived at Liverpool on Thurſday; and ſafely at home on Friday, July 15, 1796. Bleſſed be the Preſerver of

men, the Saviour of ſinners, and the help of his ſervants, for evermore, amen, amen."

Some time after, writing to his friend who accompanied him, he ſays, "I have received ſeveral letters from Dublin:—two from Maſter B. one from Miſs H——, one from M——, three or four from the Baptiſt friends, and ſome from others, whom I cannot recollect.—Mr. K——— lately called on me in his way from Bath to Holyhead. We talked of you, and of our Lord, and did not part till we had preſented ourſelves before the throne."

During his labours in Dublin, he was ſtrongly ſolicited to ſettle in a very flattering ſituation in the neighbourhood;* and a very liberal ſalary was offered him. On his poſitively declining it, mention was made of only *ſix months* of the year. When that was declined, *three months* were propoſed; and when he was about to anſwer this in the negative, the party refuſed to receive his anſwer, deſiring him to take time to conſider of it. He did ſo; and though he entertained a very grateful ſenſe of the kindneſs and generoſity expreſſed by the propoſal, yet after the matureſt deliberation, he thought it his duty to decline it. Mr. Pearce's modeſty prevented his talking on ſuch a ſubject; but it was known at the time by his friend who accompanied him, and ſince his death, has been frequently mentioned as an inſtance of his diſintereſted ſpirit.

His friends at Birmingham were ready to think it hard that he ſhould be ſo willing to leave them to go on a miſſion among the heathen; but they could not well complain, and much leſs think ill of him, when they

* At the *Black Rock*, the reſidence of ſome of the moſt genteel families in the vicinity of Dublin.

they saw that such a willingness was more than could be effected by the most flattering prospects of a worldly nature, accompanied too with promising appearances of religious usefulness.

About a month after his return from Dublin, Mr. Pearce addressed a letter to Mr. Carey, in which he gives some farther account of Ireland, as well as of some other interesting matters :—

" *Birmingham, August* 12, 1796.

" OH my dear brother, did you but know with what feelings I resume my pen, freely to correspond with you after receiving your very affectionate letter to myself, and perusing that which you sent by the same conveyance to the Society, I am sure you would persuade yourself that I have no common friendship for you, and that your regards are at least returned with equal ardor.

" I fear (I had almost said) that I shall never see your face in the flesh, but if any thing can add to the joy which the presence of Christ, and conformity, perfect conformity, to him will afford in heaven, surely the certain prospect of meeting with my dear brother Carey there, is one of (if not) *the* greatest. Thrice happy should I be, if the providence of God would open a way for my partaking of your labours, your sufferings, and your pleasures on this side the eternal world : but all my brethren here are of a mind, that I shall be more useful at home than abroad ; and I, though reluctantly, submit. Yet I am truly with you in spirit. My heart is at Mudnabatty, and at times I even hope to find my body there : but with the Lord I leave it ; *He* knows my wishes, my motives, my regret ; *He* knows all my soul ; and, depraved as it is, I feel an inexpressible satisfaction that he does know it. However, it is a humbling

humbling thought to me, that he ſees I am unfit for ſuch a ſtation, and unworthy ſuch an honour as to bear his name among the heathen. But I muſt be thankful ſtill, that though he appoints me not to a poſt in foreign ſervice, he will allow me to ſtand centinel at home. In this ſituation may I have grace to be faithful unto death!

"I hardly wonder at your being pained on account of the effects produced in the minds of your European friends, by the news of your engagement in the Indigo buſineſs, becauſe I imagine you are ignorant of the proceſs of that matter amongſt us. When I received the news, I glorified God in ſincerity, on account of it, and gave moſt hearty thanks to him for his moſt gracious appearance on your behalf: but at the ſame time I feared, leſt through that undertaking, the work of the Miſſion might in ſome way or other be impeded. The ſame impreſſion was made on the minds of many others: yet no blame was attached, in our view, to you. Our minds were only alarmed for the future; not diſpoſed to cenſure for the paſt. Had you ſeen a faithful copy of the prayers, the praiſes, and the converſation of the day in which your letters were read, I know you would not have entertained one unkind thought of the Society towards you. Oh no, my dear brother, far be it from us to lay an atom upon your ſpirits of a painful nature. Need I ſay, We do love, we do reſpect you, we do confide too much in you to *deſign* the ſmalleſt occaſion of diſtreſs to your heart. But I cloſe this ſubject. In future we will atone for an expreſſion that might bear a harſh conſtruction. We will ſtrengthen, we will ſupport, we will comfort, we will encourage you in your arduous work:—all, *all* ſhall be love and kindneſs; glory to God, and good will to men. If I have done aught that is wrong, as an individual, pardon me: If we have ſaid aught amiſs, as a Society, pardon us.

Let

Let us forbear one another in love, forgiving one another, even as God for Chriſt's ſake hath forgiven us.

"By the time this reaches you, I hope you will have received Nos. I. and II. of Periodical Accounts. Should you find any thing in them, which you think had better be omitted, pray be free in mentioning it, and in future your inſtructions ſhall be fully attended to. We have taken all the pains, and uſed all the caution in our power to render them unexceptionable; but you can better judge in ſome reſpects than we. If you ſhould not approve of all (though we are not conſcious of any thing that you will diſapprove) you will not be offended, but believe we have done our beſt, and with your remarks, hope to do better ſtill.

"With pleaſure, approaching to rapture, I read the laſt accounts you ſent us. I never expected immediate ſucceſs: the proſpect is truly greater than my moſt ſanguine hopes. "The kingdom of heaven is like to a *little* leaven hid in three meaſures of meal, till the *whole* is leavened." Bleſſed be God! the leaven is in the meal, and its influence is already diſcoverable. A great God is doing great things by you. Go on, my deareſt brother, go on; God will do greater things than theſe. Jeſus is worthy of a *world* of praiſe: and ſhall *Hindoſtan* not praiſe him? Surely he ſhall ſee of the travail of his ſoul *there*, and the ſower and the reaper ſhall rejoice together. Already the empire of darkneſs totters, and ſoon it ſhall doubtleſs fall. Bleſſed be the labourers in this important work; and bleſſed be *He* who giveth them hearts and ſtrength to labour, and promiſes that they ſhall not labour in vain!

"Do not fear the want of money. *God* is for us, and the ſilver and the gold are his; and ſo are the hearts of

of thoſe who poſſeſs the moſt of it. I will travel from the Land's end to the Orkney's but we will get money enough for all the demands of the miſſion. I have never had a fear on that head: a little exertion will do wonders; and paſt experience juſtifies every confidence. *Men*, we only want; and God ſhall find them for us in due time.

"Is brother Fountain arrived? We hope he will be an acceptable remittance, and, viva voce, compenſate for the lack of epiſtolary communications.

"I rejoice in contemplating a church of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt in Bengal, formed upon his own plan. Why do not the Hindoo converts join it? Lord, help their unbelief! But perhaps the drop is now withheld, that you may by and by have the ſhower, and lift up your eyes, and ſay, "Theſe, whence came they? They fly as clouds, and as doves to their windows." For three years, we read of few baptized by the firſt diſciples of our Lord; but on the fourth, three thouſand, and five thouſand openly avowed him. The Lord ſend *you* ſuch another Pentecoſt!

"I intend to write my dear brother a long letter. It will prove my *deſire* to gratify him, if it do no more. I wiſh that I knew in what communications your other correſpondents will be moſt deficient: then I would try to ſupply their omiſſions.

"I will begin with myſelf: but I have nothing good to ſay. I think I am the moſt vile ungrateful ſervant that ever Jeſus Chriſt employed in his church. At ſome times, I queſtion whether I ever knew the grace of God in truth; and at others, I heſitate on the moſt important points of Chriſtian faith. I have lately had peculiar ſtruggles of this kind with my own heart, and have often half concluded to ſpeak no more in the

the name of the Lord. When I am preparing for the pulpit, I fear I am going to avow fables for facts, and doctrines of men for the truths of God. In converſation I am obliged to be ſilent, leſt my tongue ſhould belie my heart. In prayer I know not what to ſay, and at times think prayer altogether uſeleſs. Yet I cannot wholly ſurrender my hope, or my profeſſion. Three things I find, above all others, tend to my preſervation :—Firſt, A recollection of a time, when, *at once*, I was brought to abandon the practice of ſins, which the fear of damnation could never bring me to relinquiſh before. Surely I ſay, this muſt be the finger of God, according to the ſcripture doctrine of regeneration :—Secondly, I feel ſuch a conſciouſneſs of guilt, that nothing but the goſpel ſcheme can ſatisfy my mind reſpecting the hope of ſalvation :—and, Thirdly, I ſee that what true devotion does appear in the world, ſeems only to be found among thoſe to whom Chriſt is precious.

" But I frequently find a backwardneſs to ſecret prayer, and much deadneſs in it : and it puzzles me to ſee how this can be conſiſtent with a life of grace. However, I reſolve, that let what will become of me, I will do all I can for God while I live, and leave the reſt to him ; and this I uſually experience to be the beſt way to be at peace.

" I believe, that if I were more fully given up to God, I ſhould be free from theſe diſtreſſing workings of mind ; and then I long to be a Miſſionary where I ſhould have temptations to nothing but to abound in the work of the Lord, and lay myſelf entirely out for him. In ſuch a ſituation, I think pride would have but little food, and faith more occaſion for exerciſe ; ſo that the ſpiritual life, and inward religion, would thrive better than they do now.

" At

" At times, indeed, I do feel, I truſt, genuine contrition, and ſincerely lament my ſhort-comings before God. Oh the ſweets that accompany true repentance! Yes, I love to be abaſed before God. 'There it is I find my bleſſing.' May the Lord daily and hourly bring me low, and keep me ſo!

" As to my public work, I find, whilſt engaged in it, little cauſe to complain for want either of matter or words. My labours are acceptable, and not altogether unprofitable to the hearers: but what is this to me, if my own ſoul ſtarves whilſt others are fed by me? Oh, my brother, I need your prayers, and I feel a great ſatisfaction in the hope that you do not forget me. Oh that I may be kept faithful unto death! Indeed, in the midſt of my ſtrugglings, a gleam of hope, that I ſhall at laſt awake in the likeneſs of God, affords me greater joy than words can expreſs. To be with Chriſt, is far better than to continue ſinning here: but if the Lord hath any thing to do by me, His will be done.

" I have never ſo fully opened my caſe to any one before. Your freedom on ſimilar topics encourages me to make my complaint to you, and I think, if you were near me, I ſhould feel great relief in revealing to you all my heart. But I ſhall fatigue you with my moanings; ſo I will have done on this ſubject.

" It is not long ſince I returned from a kind of miſſion to *Ireland*. A ſociety is eſtabliſhed in Dublin for the purpoſe of inviting from England, miniſters of various denominations, to aſſiſt in promoting the intereſts of the kingdom of Chriſt there. Some of our Baptiſt brethren had been there before me, as Rippon, Langdon, Francis, and Birt; and I think the plan is calculated for uſefulneſs. I have, at Dr. Rippon's requeſt, ſent him ſome remarks on my viſit, for the

the Regiſter ; but as it is probable you will receive this before that comes to hand, I will ſay ſomething of my excurſion here.

" Having engaged to ſpend ſix Lord's days in that kingdom, I arrived there the day before the firſt Sabbath in June. I firſt made myſelf acquainted with the general ſtate of religion in Dublin. I found there were four Preſbyterian congregations ; two of theſe belong to the ſouthern preſbytery, and are Arians or Socinians ; the other two are connected with the northern preſbytery, and retain the Weſtminſter confeſſion of faith. One of theſe latter congregations is very ſmall, and the miniſter, though orthodox, appears to have but little ſucceſs. The other is large and flouriſhing : the place of worſhip ninety feet by ſeventy, and, in a morning, well filled. Their times of public ſervice are at half paſt eleven, and five. In the afternoon, the uſual congregations are ſmall indeed ; for five o'clock is the dining hour in Dublin, and few of the hearers would leave their dinners for the goſpel. Dr. Mc. Dowal is the ſenior paſtor of this church,—a very affectionate, ſpiritual man. The junior is Mr. Horner. The doctor is a warm friend to the Society, at whoſe requeſt I went over to Ireland.

" There is one congregation of Burgher Seceders, and another of Antiburghers. The latter will not hear any man who is not of their own caſt ; the former are much more liberal. I preached for them once, and they affectionately ſolicited a repetition of my ſervices.

" Lady Huntingdon's connexion has one ſociety here, the only one in the kingdom, perhaps, except at Sligo, where there is another. It is not large, and I fear rather declining. There is not one independent church in the kingdom. There were ten Baptiſt So-

cieties in Ireland: they are now reduced to ſix; and are, I fear, ſtill on the decline.

"The inhabitants of Dublin ſeem to be chiefly compoſed of two claſſes: the one aſſume the appearance of opulence; the other exhibit marks of the moſt abject poverty; and as there are no pariſhes in Ireland which provide for the poor, many die every year for want of the neceſſaries of life.

"Moſt of the rich are by profeſſion proteſtants; the poor are nearly all papiſts, and ſtrongly prejudiced againſt the reformed religion. Their ignorance and ſuperſtition are ſcarcely inferior to your miſerable Hindoos. On midſummer day I had an affecting proof of the latter. On the public road, about a mile from Dublin, is a well, which was once included in the precincts of a priory, dedicated to St. John of Jeruſalem. This well is in high repute for curing a number of bodily complaints, and its virtues are ſaid to be moſt efficacious on the ſaint's own day. So from twelve o'clock at night, for twenty-four hours, it becomes the rendezvous for all the lame, blind, and otherwiſe diſeaſed people, within a circuit of twenty miles. Here they brought old and young, and applied the "holy water," both internally and externally; ſome by pouring, ſome by immerſion, and all by drinking: whilſt, for the good of thoſe who could not come in perſon, their friends filled bottles with the efficacious water to uſe at home. Several I ſaw on their knees before the well, at their devotions, who were not unfrequently interrupted with a glaſs of whiſkey. With this they were ſupplied from a number of dealers in that article, who kept ſtandings all round the well.

"Near the ſpot, was a church-yard where great numbers kneeled upon the tombs of their deceaſed relatives,

relatives, and appeared earneſtly engaged in praying for the repoſe of their ſouls.

" It was truly a lamentable ſight. My heart ached at their deluſions, whilſt I felt gratitude, I hope, unfeigned, for an acquaintance with the ' water of life, of which, if a man drink, he ſhall live forever !'

" There are few, or none, of the middle claſs to connect the rich and the poor, ſo that favourable acceſs to them is far more difficult than to the lower orders of the people in England ; and their prieſts hold them in ſuch bondage, that if a catholic ſervant only attend on family worſhip in a proteſtant houſe, penance muſt be performed for the offence.

S. P."

Mention has already been made of his having " formed a pleaſing acquaintance with ſeveral ſerious young gentlemen of the Univerſity of Dublin."* The following letter was addreſſed to one of them, the Rev. Mr. Matthias, a few months after his return :—

" Dear brother Matthias,

" I HAVE been employed this whole day in writing letters to Dublin ; and it is the firſt day I have been able to redeem for that purpoſe. I will not conſume a page in apology. Let it ſuffice to ſay, that neceſſity, not diſinclination, has detained from my Iriſh friends, thoſe proofs of my gratitude and eſteem, which in other circumſtances I ought to have preſented three months ago. I thought this morning of anſwering all their demands before I ſlept : but I have written

* P. 68.

written so many sheets, and all full, that I find my eyes and my fingers both fail; and I believe this must close my intercourse with Dublin this day. When I shall be able to complete my purpose, I do not know. To form friendships with good men is pleasant; but to maintain *all that communion*, which friendship expects, is in some cases very difficult. Happy should I be, could I meet my Irish friends in propria persona, instead of sitting in solitude, and maintaining, by the tedious medium of the pen, this distant intercourse. But, *The Lord, he shall choose our inheritance for us.* Were all the planets of our system embodied, and placed in close association, the light would be greater, and the object grander; but then, usefulness and systematic beauty consist in their dispersion: and what are we, my brother, but so many satellites to Jesus, the great Sun of the Christian system? Some, indeed, like burning mercuries, keep nearer the luminary, and receive more of its light and heat, whilst others, like the ringed planet, or the Georgium Sidus, preserve a greater distance, and reflect a greater portion of his light: yet if, amidst all this diversity, *they belong to the system*, two things may be affirmed of all:—all keep true to one centre, and borrow whatever light they have from one source. True it is, that the further they are from the sun, the longer are they in performing their revolutions: and is not this exemplified in us? The closer we keep to Jesus, the more brilliant are our graces, the more cheerful and active are our lives; but alas we are all comets; we all move in eccentric orbits: at one time glowing beneath the ray divine, at another freezing and congealing the icicles. 'Oh what a miracle to man is man!'

"Little did I think when I begun this letter, that I should have thus indulged myself in allegory: but true friendship, I believe, always dictates extempore; and my friends must never expect from me a studied epistle.

tle. They can meet with better thoughts, than I can furnish them with, in any bookseller's shop. It is not the dish, however well it may be cooked, that gives the relish, but the sweet sauce of friendship; and this, I think sometimes, makes even nonsense palatable.

"But I have some questions to put to you:—first, how are all my college friends, Messrs. Walker, Maturin, Hamilton, &c.? How is their health? But chiefly, how are the interests of religion among you? Are any praying students added to your number? Do all those you thought well of continue to justify their profession? You know what it is that interests me. Pray tell me all, whether it makes me weep, or rejoice.

"I hope Mr. H—'s ministry was blessed in Dublin. Do you know any instances of it? We must sow in hope, and I trust that we shall all gather fruit to eternal life, even where the buddings have never appeared to us in this world. How is it with your own soul? I thank God I never, I think, rejoiced habitually so much in him as I have done of late. '*God is love.*' That makes me happy. I rejoice that God reigns; that he reigns over all; that he reigns over *me*; over my crosses, my comforts, my family, my friends, my senses, my mental powers, my designs, my words, my preaching, my conduct; that he is *God over all*, blessed forever. I am willing to live, yet I long to die, to be freed from all error and all sin. I have nothing else to trouble me; no other cross to carry. The sun shines without all day long; but I am sensible of internal darkness. Well, through grace, it shall be all light by and by. Yes, you and I shall be *angels* of light; all mercuries then; all near the sun; always in motion; always glowing with zeal, and flaming with love. Oh for the new heavens and the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness!

'Oh what love and concord there,
And what sweet harmony
In heaven above, where happy souls
Adore thy Majesty.
Oh how the heavenly choirs all sing
To Him, who sits enthron'd above:
What admiring!
And aspiring!
Still desiring:—
Oh how I long to see this feast of love!'

"Will you tell brother M—— that I wait an opportunity to send a parcel to him? In that I will inclose a letter. My very affectionate respects to him, and Mr. H——, with all my college friends as though named. If you be not weary of such an eccentric correspondent, pray do not be long ere you write to your unworthy, but affectionate brother in Christ,

S. P."

A while after this, he thus writes to his friend, Mr. Summers:—

"December, 1796. I rejoice that you have been supported under, and brought through your late trials. I do not wonder at it, for it is no more than God has *promised*; and though we may well wonder that he promises any thing, yet his performance is no just ground of surprise; and when we find ourselves so employed, we had better turn our wonder to our own unbelief, that for one moment suspected God would not be as good as his word.

"I have been lately more than ever delighted with the thought, that God *hath engaged* to do any thing for such worms as we. I never studied the deistical controversy so much, nor ever rejoiced in revelation more.

more. Alas! what ſhould we know, if God had not condeſcended to teach us. Paul very juſtly remarks, that no one knoweth any thing of God, but the Spirit of God, and he to whom the Spirit revealeth him. Now the Spirit hath revealed God in the bible, but to an unbeliever the bible is a ſealed book. He can know nothing from a book that he looks upon as an impoſture, and yet there is no other book in which God is revealed; ſo that to reject the bible, is to immerſe ourſelves in darkneſs, and whilſt profeſſing to be wiſe, actually to become a fool; whereas, no ſooner do we believe what the Spirit ſaith, than unto us is God revealed, and 'in his light do we ſee light.'

'S. P."

To the above may be added, a few extracts of letters, which he addreſſed to his friends in 1797, and 1798.

To Dr. RYLAND.

"*March*, 1797.

"DURING the laſt three weeks, I have, at times, been very poorly, in colds, &c. Am better now, and have been all along aſſiſted in going through my public duties. Let us continue to pray for each other, till death makes it a needleſs ſervice. How uncertain is life, and what a bleſſing is death to a ſaint! I ſeem lately to feel a kind of *affection* for death. Methinks if it were viſible, I could embrace it. 'Welcome herald, that bids the priſoner be free; that announces the dawn of everlaſting day; that bids the redeemed come to Zion with everlaſting joy, to be beyond the reach of an erroneous judgment, and a depraved heart.' To believe, to feel, to ſpeak,

to

to act *exactly* as God will have me; to be wholly abſorbed and taken up with him; this, this, nothing ſhort of this can make my bliſs complete. But *all this is mine.* Oh the height, the depth, the length, the breadth of redeeming love! It conquers my heart, and conſtrains me to yield myſelf a living ſacrifice, acceptable to God, through Jeſus Chriſt.———My dear brother, we have had many happy meetings upon earth: the beſt is in reſerve.

> 'No heart upon earth can conceive
> The bliſs that in heaven they ſhare;
> Then, who this dark world would not leave,
> And cheerfully die to be there!'

"Oh how full of love, and joy, and praiſe, ſhall we be when that happy ſtate is ours! Well, yet a little while, and He that ſhall come, will come: Even ſo come, Lord Jeſus! My dear brother, forgive the haſty effuſions of a heart that loves you in the bowels of Jeſus, and is always happy in teſtifying itſelf to be

Affectionately yours,

S. P."

To Mr. CAVE.

On the falling away of ſome who had promiſed fair in religion.

———, 1797.

"I THANK you, my dear brother, for the confidence you repoſe in me, the affection you have for me, and the freedom with which you write to me. Aſſure yourſelf that I ſincerely ſympathize in the cutting events which you have lately experienced. Trying indeed! Your heart muſt bleed. Yet be not diſcouraged

discouraged in your work. The more *satan* opposes *Christ*, the more let *us* oppose *him*. He comes with great violence because his time is short. His kingdom is on the decline; his strong holds are besieged, and he knows they must soon be taken. Whilst it lasts, he is making desperate sallies on the armies of the Lamb. It is no great wonder that he fights and wounds a raw recruit now and then, who strays from the camp, and thoughtless of the danger, keeps not close by the Captain's tent. I hope our glorious Leader will heal the wounded, and secure the captive. He is sure to make reprisals. Christ will have ten to one. You will yet see his arm made bare. He shall go forth like a man of war. The prisoners shall be redeemed, and the old tyrant shall be cast into the bottomless pit. Be of good cheer, my fellow soldier. The cause is not ours, but God's. Let us endure hardness, and still fight the good fight of faith. At last we shall come off conquerors, through Him who hath loved us.

"I hope you have some causes for joy, as well as grief. I trust though one, or two, or three fall, the tens, and the twenties stand their ground. Oh do what you can to cheer them under the common trial. Let them not see a faint heart in *you*. Fight manfully still. Tell them to watch the more; to pray the harder; to walk the closer with God. So out of the eater shall come forth meat, and sweetness out of the strong. S. P."

To Mr. BATES and Mrs. BARNES,

Who had been burnt out of their residence.

"THE many expressions of Christian friendship which I received from you, and your affectionate families,

families, during my laſt viſit to London, will often excite grateful recollection in future, as they have almoſt daily ſince I parted from you; and though I do not write this avowedly as a mere letter of acknowledgment, yet I wiſh it to aſſure you, that I am not forgetful of my friends, nor unthankful for their kindneſs. May all the favour you ſhew to the ſervants of our common Lord for his ſake, be amply recompenſed in preſent peace, and future felicity, when the promiſe of Him who cannot lie, ſhall be fulfilled,—'A cup of cold water given to a diſciple, in the name of a diſciple, ſhall not loſe its reward.'

"But, whilſt you, my dear friends, live 'in hope of the glory' that remains 'to be revealed,' I am perſuaded that you expect *all* as the fruit of ſovereign mercy, which firſt forms us to the mind of Chriſt, then accepts, and then rewards. Truly, if ſinners be rewarded, it muſt be, 'of grace, and not of debt.' Yet it is a mercy of unſpeakable magnitude, that grace ſhould eſtabliſh a connexion between obedience and enjoyment; ſuch a connexion, as at once inſures joy to the believer, and glory to Chriſt.

"Oh that our thoughts, our affections, our deſires, may be much in heaven! *Here*, you have been taught, is 'no continuing city,' no certain place of abode; and though you have been taught it awfully in flames, yet if you learn it effectually, the terror of the means will be conquered by the excellency and glory of the conſequences. Yes, my friends, 'in heaven we have a better and enduring ſubſtance:' the apartments there are more ſpacious; the ſociety more ſweet; the enjoyments more perfect; and all to laſt forever. Well may Chriſtians 'rejoice in hope of the glory of God!'

S. P."

To

To Mr. and Mrs. BOWYER, Pall Mall.

"*November* 17, 1797.

"BLESSED be 'the Preſerver of men,' for all his goodneſs to dear Mr. and Mrs. B——. With theirs, ſhall my gratitude alſo aſcend, whilſt ſeparated from their ſociety; and with theirs, ſhall it more warmly and permanently aſcend when we meet to form a part of the 'general aſſembly, the church of the firſt-born.'

"I do not return to London this autumn, but I mean to viſit Portſmouth. I muſt be indebted to you for my directions. We ſhall be very happy to ſee you at Luke-ſtreet: but *Wales* I ſuppoſe will be the vortex that will ſwallow up much of your time. Well, ſo *you* are happy, we muſt be diſintereſted enough to be ſatisfied, although we be denied a perſonal participation.

"Let us not forget that we are Chriſtians; and Chriſtians profeſs a hope of a better country than *Cambria* contains. *There*, we all belong. Already citizens by privilege, we ſhall be by poſſeſſion ſoon.

'Roll ſwifter round, ye wheels of time,
And bring the welcome day!'

"In hope of greeting you both in that good land, I remain, moſt affectionately yours,

S. P."

To Dr. RYLAND.

"*November* 17, 1797.

"I FEEL much for you in relation both to the duties and trials of your preſent ſituation: at the ſame

same time I bless God who fixed you in it, because I am persuaded that it will be for his glory in the churches of Christ. And though none but those, whose hands are full of religious concerns, can guess at your difficulties; yet our blessed Redeemer knows them all. Oh, my brother, you are travailing for Him, who redeemed you by his blood; who sympathizes with you, and who will graciously crown you at last. Small as my trials are, I would turn smith, and work at the anvil and the forge, rather than bear them for any other master than *Christ*. Yet were they ten thousand times as many as they are, the thought of their being for Him, I trust, would sweeten them all.

"I have reason to be very thankful for much pleasure of late, both as a Christian, and a minister. I have never felt so deeply my need of a Divine Redeemer, and seldom possessed such solid confidence that he is mine. I want more and more to become a little child, to dwindle into nothing in my own esteem, to renounce my own wisdom, power and goodness, and simply look to, and live upon JESUS for all. I am ashamed that I have so much pride, so much self-will. Oh my Saviour! make me 'meek and lowly in heart;' in this alone I find 'rest to my soul.'

"I could say much of what Immanuel has done for my soul; but I fear lest even this should savour of vanity. When shall I be like my Lord! Oh welcome death, when I have nothing more to do for Christ. To him, till then, may I live every day and every hour. Rather may I be annihilated than not live to him!

"You will rejoice with me to hear that we have a pleasing prospect as a church. Several very hopeful,

and

and ſome very valuable characters are about to join us. Lord, carry on thy work!

S. P."

To Mrs. PEARCE,

On the dangerous illneſs of one of the children.

"*Portſmouth, January* 29, 1798.

"IGNORANT of the circumſtances of our dear child, how ſhall I addreſs myſelf to her dearer mother! With a fluttering heart, and a trembling hand, I, in this uncertainty, reſume my pen. One conſideration tranquillizes my mind,—I and mine are in the hands of *God*: the wiſe, the good, the indulgent Parent of mankind! Whatever *he* does is beſt. I am prepared for all his will, and hope that I ſhall never have a feeling, whoſe language is not, 'Thy will be done.'

"I am moſt kindly entertained here by Mr. and Mrs. Shoveller; and except my dear Sarah's preſence, feel myſelf at home. *They* have had greater trials than *we* can at preſent know. They have attended *ſeven* children to the gloomy tomb: they have been ſupported beneath their loſs, by Him who hath ſaid, 'As thy days, ſo ſhall thy ſtrength be.' Mrs. S. tells me, ſhe 'bleſſed God for all.' May my dear Sarah be enabled to do the ſame, whatever the reſult may prove. To-morrow I expect another letter from you; yet, leſt you ſhould too much feel my abſence, I will not delay forwarding this a ſingle poſt. O that it may prove in ſome degree a meſſenger of conſolation!

"Yeſterday I preached three times: God was very good. I received your letter before the firſt ſervice: you may be aſſured that I bore you on my heart in

the preſence of my Lord and yours ; nor ſhall I pray in vain : He will either reſtore the child, or ſupport you under the loſs of it. I dare not pray with importunity for any *earthly good ;* for 'who knoweth what is good for man in this life, all the days of his vain life which he ſpendeth as a ſhadow ?' But *ſtrength* to bear the loſs of earthly comforts, he has *promiſed :* for *that* I importune ; and *that*, I doubt not, will be granted.

" In a houſe directly oppoſite to the window before which I now write, a *wife*, a *mother*, is juſt departed ! Why am I not a bereaved huſband ? Why not my children motherleſs ? When we compare our condition with our wiſhes, we often complain : but if we compare it with that of many around us, our complaints would be exchanged for gratitude and praiſe.

S. P."

To R. BOWYER, Eſq.

" *February* 14, 1793.

" NOT a day has hurried by, ſince I parted with my dear friends in Pall Mall, but they have been in my affectionate remembrance ; but not being able to ſpeak with any ſatisfaction reſpecting our dear child, I have withheld myſelf from imparting new anxieties to boſoms already alive to painful ſenſibility.

" At length, however, a gracious God puts it in my power to ſay, that there is hope. After languiſhing between life and death for many days, ſhe now ſeems to amend. We flatter ourſelves that ſhe has paſſed the criſis, and will yet be reſtored to our arms ; but parental fears forbid too ſtrong a confidence. It may be that our moſt merciful God ſaw that the ſhock

ſhock of a ſudden removal would be too ſtrong for the tender feelings of a mother; and ſo by degrees, prepares for the ſtroke which muſt fall at laſt. However, ſhe is in the beſt hands, and we are, I hope, preparing for ſubmiſſion to whatever may be the bleſſed will of God.

"I was brought home in ſafety, and feel myſelf in much better health in conſequence of my journey. Oh that it may be all conſecrated to my Redeemer's praiſe!

"Happy ſhould I be, if I could oftener enjoy your friendly ſociety; but we muſt wait for the full accompliſhment of our ſocial wiſhes, till we come to that better world, for which divine grace is preparing us:—*There* our beſt, our brighteſt hopes, and there our warmeſt affections muſt be found. Could we have all we want below, we ſhould be reluctant to aſcend, when Jeſus calls us home. No, this is not our reſt; it is polluted with ſin, and daſhed with ſorrow: but though our pains in themſelves are evil, yet our God turns the curſe into a bleſſing, and makes all that we meet with accompliſh our good.

"What better can I wiſh, my friends, than the humble place of Mary, or the happy reſt of John! Faith can enjoy them both, till actually we fall at the Saviour's feet, and lean upon his boſom, when we ſee him as he is.

'Oh the delights, the heav'nly joys,
The glories of the place,
Where Jeſus ſheds the brighteſt beams
Of his o'erflowing grace!'

S. P."

LINES

LINES

WRITTEN ON THE WORDS OF IGNATIUS,—

*" My Love is crucified."**

MEUM DESIDERIUM CRUCIFIXUM EST.

" WARM was his heart, his faith was ſtrong,
Who thus in rapture cry'd,
When on his way to martyrdom,
My Love is crucify'd.

Warm alſo be my love for Him,
Who thus for ſinners dy'd ;
Long as I live be this my theme,
My Love is crucify'd.

Come, oh my ſoul, behold him pierc'd
In hands, and feet, and ſide ;
And ſay, while he's in blood immers'd,
My Love is crucify'd.

What lover ere to win my heart,
So much has done beſide ?
To him I'll cleave, and never part ;
My Love is crucify'd.

Oh that in Jeſus' wounds, my ſoul
Secure, may ever hide,
And ſing, as changing ſeaſons roll,
My Love is crucify'd.

In

* When *Ignatius*, paſtor of the church at Antioch, was condemned by the emperor, Trajan, to ſuffer death at Rome, he was apprehenſive that the Chriſtians there, out of their great affection for him, might endeavour to prevent his martyrdom ; and therefore wrote a letter from Smyrna to the Roman Chriſtians, which he ſent on before him, wherein he earneſtly beſeeches them to take no meaſures for the continuance of his life ; and amongſt other things, ſays, " I long for death," adding as a reaſon why he was deſirous of thus teſtifying his love to Chriſt, " My Love is crucified."

In ſeaſons oft, when bow'd with fear,
My trembling heart has ſigh'd,
This thought again brings comfort near,
My Love is crucify'd.

To what a teſt his love was put,
When by his ſuff'rings try'd,
But faithful to the end endur'd;
My Love is crucify'd.

His garments white as wintry ſnows,
In crimſon floods were dy'd;
Hence ſpring the bleſſings he beſtows;
My Love is crucify'd.

Down from his wounded body flow'd
The all-atoning tide,
Which peace reſtor'd 'twixt me and God;
My Love is crucify'd.

Now, by the Croſs, is hell ſubdu'd,
And all its pow'rs defy'd;
It yields to Jeſus' conqu'ring blood;
My Love is crucify'd.

Ne'er may my dear deſpiſed Lord
By me be once deny'd;
My joy, my crown, my boaſt be this,
My Love is crucify'd.

Dead be my heart to all below,
In Chriſt may I abide;
Why ſhould I love the creature ſo?
My Love is crucify'd.

Shameful his death, oh let it ſlay
In me all curſed pride;
Lowly in Jeſus, may I ſay,
My Love is crucify'd.

When firſt my ſoul, by living faith,
My bleeding Lord eſpy'd,
My lips declar'd, at ev'ry breath,
My Love is crucify'd.

And ſince my happy heart has known
His ſacred blood apply'd,
This ſtill has been my ſweeteſt ſong,
My Love is crucify'd.

And whilſt upon this world I ſtay,
Whate'er may me betide,
To all around I'll ever ſay,
My Love is crucify'd.

When through death's gloomy vale I walk,
My Lord ſhall be my guide;
To him I'll ſing, of him I'll talk,
My Love is crucify'd.

Could I, his praiſe e'en now I'd ſound,
As vaſt creation wide;
But I ſhall ſing on heav'nly ground,
My Love is crucify'd.

Yes, when to that bleſt land I mount,
On places high to ride,
Through all eternity I'll ſhout,
My Love is crucify'd!

Jan. 19, 1795. S. P."

"THE GARDENER AND ROSE-TREE."

"A FABLE,"

"*Affectionately addreſſed to Mrs. J. H——, on the death of her child, by her truly ſympathizing friend,*

S. P."

MARCH 12, 1798.

"IN a ſweet ſpot, which Wiſdom choſe,
Grew an unique and lovely Roſe;
A flow'r ſo fair was ſeldom borne—
A Roſe almoſt without a thorn.
Each paſſing ſtranger ſtopp'd to view
A plant poſſeſſing charms ſo new:
"*Sweet Flow'r!*" each lip was heard to ſay—
Nor leſs the Owner pleas'd than they:
Rear'd by his hand with conſtant care,
And planted in his choice parterre,
Of all his garden this the pride,
No flow'r ſo much admir'd beſide.

Nor did the Roſe unconſcious bloom,
Nor feel ungrateful for the boon;
Oft as her guardian came that way,
Whether at dawn, or eve of day,
Expanded wide—her form unvail'd,
She *double fragrance* then exhal'd.

As months roll'd on, the ſpring appear'd,
Its genial rays the Roſe matur'd;
Forth from its root a *ſhoot* extends—
The parent Roſe-tree downward bends,
And, with a joy unknown before,
Contemplates the yet embryo flow'r.

'Offspring moſt dear (ſhe fondly ſaid,)
'Part of myſelf! beneath my ſhade,
'Safe ſhalt thou riſe, whilſt happy I,
'Tranſported with maternal joy,

'Shall

'Shall ſee thy little buds appear,
'Unfold, and bloom in beauty here.
'What though the Lily, or Jonquil,
'Or Hyacinth no longer fill
'The ſpace around me—*All* ſhall be
'Abundantly made up in *thee*.

'What though my preſent charms decay,
'And paſſing ſtrangers no more ſay
'Of *me*, 'Sweet flow'r!'—Yet *thou* ſhalt raiſe
'Thy blooming head, and gain the praiſe;
'And this reverberated pleaſure
'Shall be to me a world of treaſure.
'Cheerful I part with former merit,
'That it my darling may inherit.
'Haſte then the hours which bid thee bloom,
'And fill the zephyrs with perfume!'

Thus had the Roſe-tree ſcarcely ſpoken,
Ere the ſweet cup of bliſs was broken—
The Gard'ner came, and with one ſtroke
He from the root the offſpring took;
Took from the ſoil wherein it grew,
And hid it from the parent's view.

Judge ye, who know a mother's cares
For the dear tender babe ſhe bears,
The parent's anguiſh—ye alone
Such ſad viciſſitudes have known.

Deep was the wound; nor ſlight the pain
Which made the Roſe-tree thus complain:—

'Dear little darling! art thou gone—
'Thy charms ſcarce to thy mother known!
'Remov'd ſo ſoon!—So ſuddenly,
'Snatch'd from my fond maternal eye!
'What hadſt thou done?—dear offſpring! ſay,
'So *early* to be ſnatch'd away!
'What! gone for *ever!*—ſeen *no more!*
'For *ever* I thy loſs deplore.

'Ye

'Ye dews descend, with tears supply
'My now for ever tearful eye;
'Or rather come some *northern blast*,
'Dislodge my yielding roots in haste.
'*Whirlwinds* arise—my branches tear,
'And to some distant region bear
'Far from this spot, a wretched mother,
'Whose fruit and joys are gone together.'

As thus the anguish'd Rose-tree cry'd,
Her Owner near her she espy'd;
Who in these gentle terms reprov'd
A plant, though murm'ring, still belov'd:—

'Cease, beauteous flow'r, these useless cries,
'And let my lessons make thee wise.
'Art thou not mine? Did not my hand
'Transplant thee from the barren sand,
'Where once a mean unsightly plant,
'Expos'd to injury and want,
'Unknown, and unadmir'd, I found,
'And brought thee to this fertile ground;
'With studious art improv'd thy form,
'Secur'd thee from the inclement storm,
'And through the seasons of the year,
'Made thee my unabating care?
'Hast thou not blest thy happy lot,
'In such an owner—such a spot?
'But now, because thy shoot I've taken,
'Thy best of friends must be forsaken.
'Know, flow'r belov'd, e'en this affliction
'Shall prove to thee a benediction:
'Had I not the young plant remov'd,
'(So fondly by thy heart belov'd)
'Of me thy heart would scarce have thought,
'With gratitude no more be fraught:
'—Yea—thy own beauty be at stake
'Surrender'd for thy offspring's sake.
'Nor think, that, hidden from thine eyes,
'The infant plant *neglected* lies—

No—

'No—I've *another garden*, where
'In richer soil and purer air
'It's now transplanted, there to shine
'In beauties fairer far than thine.

'Nor shalt thou always be apart
'From the dear darling of thy heart;
'For 'tis my purpose *thee* to bear
'In future time, and plant thee there,
'Where thy now absent off-set grows,
'And blossoms a CELESTIAL *Rose*.
'Be patient, then, till that set hour shall come,
'When thou and thine shall in new beauties bloom:
'No more its absence shall thou then deplore,
'Together grow, and ne'er be parted more.'

These words to silence hush'd the plaintive Rose,
With deeper blushes redd'ning now she glows,
Submissive bow'd her unrepining head,
Again her wonted, grateful fragrance shed—
Cry'd, 'Thou hast taken only what's thine own,
'Therefore thy will, my Lord, not mine, be done.'

CHAP. IV.

AN ACCOUNT OF HIS LAST AFFLICTION, AND THE HOLY AND HAPPY EXERCISES OF HIS MIND UNDER IT.

EARLY in October, 1798, Mr. Pearce attended at the Kettering ministers' meeting, and preached from Psalm xc. 16, 17. *Let thy work appear unto thy servants, and thy glory unto their children. And let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us: and establish thou the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands establish thou it.* He was observed to be singularly solemn and affectionate in that discourse. If he had known it to be the last time that he should address his brethren in that part of the country, he could scarcely have felt or spoken in a more interesting manner. It was a discourse full of instruction, full of a holy unction, and that seemed to breathe an apostolical ardour. On his return, he preached at Market Harborough; and riding home the next day in company with his friend, Mr. Summers, of London, they were overtaken with rain. Mr. Pearce was wet through his clothes, and towards evening complained of a chillness. A slight hoarseness followed. He preached several times after this, which brought on an inflammation, and issued in a consumption. It is probable that if his constitution had not been previously impaired, such effects might not have followed in this instance. His own ideas on this subject, are expressed in a letter to Dr. Ryland, dated December 4, 1798, and in another to Mr. King, dated from Bristol, on his way to Plymouth, March 30, 1799. In the former, he says,—"Ever since my Christmas journey last year to Sheepshead, Nottingham, and Leicester, on the mission business, I have found my constitution greatly debilitated, in consequence of a cold caught

caught after the unusual exertions which circumstances then demanded; so that from a frame that could endure any weather, I have since been too tender to encounter a single shower without danger; and the duties of the Lord's day, which, as far as bodily strength went, I could perform with little fatigue, have since frequently overcome me. But the severe cold I caught in my return from the last Kettering ministers' meeting, has affected me so much that I have sometimes concluded I must give up preaching entirely; for though my head and spirits are better than for two years past, yet my stomach is so very weak that I cannot pray in my family without frequent pauses for breath, and in the pulpit it is labour and agony, which must be felt to be conceived of. I have, however, made shift to preach sometimes thrice, but mostly only twice on a Lord's day, till the last, when the morning sermon only, though I delivered it with great pleasure of mind, and with as much caution as to my voice as possible, yet cost me so much labour as threw me into a fever till the next day, and prevented my sleeping all night."———In the letter, he thus writes——"Should my life be spared, I, and my family, and all my connexions will stand indebted, under God, to you. Unsuspecting of danger myself, I believe I should have gone on with my exertions, till the grave had received me. Your attention sent Mr. B—— (the apothecary) to me, and then first I learned what I have since been increasingly convinced of—*that I was rapidly destroying the vital principle.* And the kind interest you have taken in my welfare ever since, has often drawn the grateful tear from my eye. May the God of heaven and earth reward your kindness to his unworthy servant, and save you from all the evils from which your distinguished friendship would have saved me!"

Such were his ideas. His labours were certainly abundant; perhaps too great for his constitution: but

but it is probable that nothing was more injurious to his health, than a frequent expoſure to night air, and an inattention to the neceſſity of changing damp clothes.

Hitherto we have ſeen in Mr. Pearce, the active, aſſiduous, and laborious ſervant of Jeſus Chriſt: but now we ſee him laid aſide from his work, waſting away by ſlow degrees, patiently enduring the will of God, and cheerfully waiting for his diſſolution. And as here is but little to narrate, I ſhall content myſelf with copying his letters, or extracts from them, to his friends, in the order of time in which they were written, only now and then dropping a few hints to furniſh the reader with the occaſions of ſome of them.

To Dr. RYLAND.

"*Birmingham, October* 8, 1798.

"OH! my dear brother, your letter of the 5th, which I received this morning, has made me thankful for all *my pulpit agonies*, as they enable me to weep with a weeping brother. They have been of uſe to me in other reſpects; particularly, in teaching me the importance of attaining and maintaining that ſpirituality and pious ardour, in which I have found the moſt effectual relief; ſo that on the whole I muſt try to 'glory in tribulations alſo.' I truſt I often can when the conflict is paſt, but to glory '*in*' them, eſpecially in mental diſtreſs—hic labor, hoc opus eſt.

"But how often has it been found, that when miniſters have felt themſelves moſt embarraſſed, the moſt effectual good has been done to the people. Oh for hearts entirely reſigned to the will of God!

"How happy should I be, could I always enjoy the sympathies of a brother, who is tried in these points, as I of late have been.

S. P."

To Mr. FULLER.

"*Birmingham, October* 29, 1798.

"I CAUGHT a violent cold in returning from our last Committee-meeting, from which I have not yet recovered. A little thing now affects my constitution, which I once judged would be weather and labour proof for at least thirty years, if I lived so long. I thank God that I am not debilitated by iniquity. I have lately met with an occurrence, which occasioned me much pain and perplexity. * * * * * * Trials soften our hearts, and make us more fully prize the dear few, into whose faithful sympathizing bosoms we can with confidence pour our sorrows. I think I should bless God for my afflictions, if they produced no other fruits than these,—the tenderness they inspire, and the friendships they enjoy. Pray, my dear brother, for yours affectionately,

S. P."

To a young man who had applied to him for advice, how he should best improve his time, previous to his going to the Bristol Academy:—

"*Birmingham, November* 13, 1798.

"My dear M——,

"I CAN only confess my regret at not replying to yours at a much earlier period, and assure you that the delay has been accidental, and not designed. I feel the importance of your request for advice. I

was

was ſenſible it deſerved ſome conſideration before it was anſwered. I was full of buſineſs at the moment. I put it by, and it was forgotten; and now it is too late. The time of your going to Briſtol draws nigh. If, inſtead of an opinion reſpecting the beſt way of occupying your time before you go, you will accept a little counſel during your continuance there, I ſhall be happy at any time to contribute ſuch a mite as my experience and obſervation have put in my power.

"At preſent, the following rules appear of ſo much moment, that were I to reſume a place in any literary eſtabliſhment, I would religiouſly adopt them as the ſtandard of my conduct:—Firſt, I would cultivate a ſpirit of habitual devotion. Warm piety connected with my ſtudies, and eſpecially at my entrance upon them, would not only aſſiſt me in forming a judgment on their reſpective importance, and ſecure the bleſſing of God upon them; but would ſo cement the religious feeling with the literary purſuit, as might abide with me for life. The habit of uniting theſe, being once formed, would, I hope, be never loſt; and I am ſure that, without this, I ſhall both purſue trivial and unworthy objects, and thoſe that are worthy I ſhall purſue for a wrong end.—Secondly, I would determine on a uniform ſubmiſſion to the inſtructions of my preceptor, and ſtudy thoſe things which would give him pleaſure. If he be not wiſer than I am, for what purpoſe do I come under his care? I accepted the pecuniary help of the Society on condition of conforming to its will; and it is the Society's will that my tutor ſhould govern me. My example will have influence: let me not, by a ſingle act of diſobedience, or by a word that implicates diſſatisfaction, ſow the ſeeds of diſcord in the boſom of my companions.—Thirdly, I would pray and ſtrive for the power of *ſelf-government*, to form no plan, to utter not a word, to take no ſtep under the mere influence of paſſion.

Let

Let my judgment be often asked, and let me always give it time to answer. Let me always guard against a light or trifling spirit; and particularly as I shall be amongst a number of youths, whose years will incline them all to the same frailty.—Fourthly, I would in all my weekly and daily pursuits observe the strictest *order*. Always let me act by a plan. Let every hour have its proper pursuit; from which let nothing, but a settled conviction that I can employ it to better advantage, ever cause me to deviate. Let me have fixed time for prayer, meditation, reading, languages, correspondence, recreation, sleep, &c.—Fifthly, I would not only assign to every hour its proper pursuit; but what I did, I would try to do it with all my might. The hours at such a place are precious beyond conception, till the student enters on life's busy scenes. Let me set the best of my class ever before me, and strive to be better than they. In humility and diligence, let me aim to be the first.—Sixthly, I would particularly avoid a *versatile habit*. In all things I would persevere. Without this, I may be a gaudy butterfly, but never, like the bee, will my hive bear examining. Whatever I take in hand, let me first be sure I understand it, then duly consider it, and if it be good, let me adopt and use it.

"To these, my dear brother, let me add three or four things more minute, but which I am persuaded will help you much.—*Guard against a large acquaintance while you are a student.* Bristol friendship, while you sustain that character, will prove a vile thief, and rob you of many an invaluable hour.—*Get two or three of the students, whose piety you most approve, to meet for one hour in a week for experimental conversation, and mutual prayer.* I found this highly beneficial, though, strange to tell, by some we were persecuted for our practice!—*Keep a diary.* Once a week, at farthest, call yourself to an account: What advances you have made

made in your different ſtudies; in divinity, hiſtory, languages, natural philoſophy, ſtyle, arrangement; and amidſt all, do no not forget to inquire, Am I more fit to *ſerve* and to *enjoy* God than I was laſt week?

S. P."

On December 2, 1798, he delivered his laſt ſermon. The ſubject was taken from Dan. x. 19. *Oh man, greatly beloved, fear not, peace be unto thee, be ſtrong, yea, be ſtrong. And when he had ſpoken unto me, I was ſtrengthened, and ſaid, Let my Lord ſpeak; for thou haſt ſtrengthened me.*——"Amongſt all the Old Teſtament ſaints," ſaid he, in his introduction to that diſcourſe, "there is not one whoſe virtues were more, and whoſe imperfections were fewer, than thoſe of Daniel. By the hiſtory given of him in this book, which yet ſeems not to be complete, he appears to have excelled among the excellent." Doubtleſs, no one was farther from his thoughts than himſelf: ſeveral of his friends, however, could not help applying it to him, and that with a painful apprehenſion of what followed ſoon after.

To Mr. CAVE, Leiceſter.

"*Birmingham, December* 4, 1798.

"——— BLESSED be God, my mind is calm; and though my body be weakneſs itſelf, my ſpirits are good, and I can write as well as ever, though I can hardly ſpeak two ſentences without a pauſe. All is well, brother! all is well, for time and eternity. My ſoul rejoices in the everlaſting covenant, ordered in all things and ſure. Peace from our

our dear Lord Jesus be with your spirit, as it is (yea, more also) with your affectionate brother,

S. P."

December 9, 1798, he was detained from public worship, and wrote to Dr. Ryland the first of the letters which appear at the close of his funeral sermon.—The following lines seem to have been composed on the same occasion :—

" *On being prevented by sickness from attending on public worship.*

" THE fabric of nature is fair,
But fairer the temple of grace ;
To saints 'tis the joy of the earth—
Oh glorious, beautiful place !

To this temple I once did resort,
With crouds of the people of God ;
Enraptur'd, we enter'd its courts,
And hail'd the Redeemer's abode.

The Father of nature we prais'd,
And prostrated low at his throne ;
The Saviour *we lov'd* and ador'd,
Who *lov'd us* and made us his own.

Full oft to the message of peace,
To sinners address'd from the sky,
We listen'd, extolling that grace,
Which set us, once rebels, on high.

Faith clave to the crucify'd Lamb ;
Hope, smiling, exalted its head ;
Love warm'd at the Saviour's dear name,
And vow'd to observe what he said.

What

What pleaſure appear'd in the looks
Of brethren and ſiſters around;
With tranſport all ſeem'd to reflect
On the bleſſings in Jeſus they'd found.

Sweet moments! If aught upon earth
Reſemble the joys of the ſkies,
'Tis thus when the hearts of the flock
Conjoin'd to the Shepherd ariſe.

But ah! theſe ſweet moments are fled,
Pale ſickneſs compels me to ſtay
Where no voice of the turtle is heard,
As the moments are haſting away.

My God! thou art holy and good,
Thy plans are all righteous and wiſe;
Oh help me ſubmiſſive to wait,
Till thou biddeſt thy ſervant ariſe.

If to follow thee here in thy courts,
May it be with all ardour and zeal,
With ſucceſs and increaſing delight
Performing the whole of thy will.

Or ſhouldſt thou in bondage detain,
To viſit thy temples no more,
Prepare me for manſions above,
Where nothing exiſts to deplore!

Where Jeſus, the Sun of the place,
Refulgent inceſſantly ſhines,
Eternally bleſſing his ſaints,
And pouring delight on their minds.

There—there are no priſons to hold
The captive from taſting delight;
There—there the day never is clos'd
With ſhadows, or darkneſs, or night.

There myriads and myriads shall meet,
In our Saviour's high praises to join;
Whilst transported we fall at his feet,
And extol his redemption divine.

Enough then! my heart shall no more
Of its present bereavements complain;
Since, ere long, I to glory shall soar,
And ceaseless enjoyments attain!"

To Mr. NICHOLS, Nottingham.

"*Birmingham, Dec.* 10, 1798.

"I AM now quite laid by from preaching, and am so reduced in my internal strength, that I can hardly converse with a friend for five minutes without losing my breath. Indeed I have been so ill, that I thought the next ascent would be, not to a pulpit, but to a throne—to the throne of glory. Yes indeed, my friend, the religion of Jesus will support when flesh and heart fail; and in my worst state of body, my soul was filled with joy. I am now getting a little better, though but very slowly. But fast or slow, or as it may, the Lord doth all things well.

S. P."

To R. BOWYER, Esq.

"——— I HAVE overdone myself in preaching. I am now ordered to lie by, and not even to *converse*, without great care; nor indeed, till to-day, have I for some time been able to utter a sentence, without a painful effort. Blessed be God! I have been filled all through my affliction with peace and joy

joy in believing; and at one time, when I thought I was entering the valley of death, the prospect beyond was so full of glory, that but for the sorrow it would have occasioned to some who would be left behind, I should have longed that moment to have mounted to the skies. Oh, my friend, what a mercy that I am not receiving the wages of sin; that my health has not been impaired by vice; but that, on the contrary, I am *bearing in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus.* To him be all the praise! Truly I have proved that God is faithful: and most cheerfully would I take double the affliction for one half of the joy and sweetness which have attended it. Accept a sermon which is this day published.*

S. P."

To Mr. BATES and Mrs. BARNES, Minories.

"*Birmingham, Dec.* 14, 1798.

"——— I COULD tell you much of the Lord's goodness during my affliction. Truly 'his right hand hath been under my head, and his left embraced me.' And when I was at the worst, especially, and expected ere long to have done with time, even *then*, such holy joy, such ineffable sweetness filled my soul, that I would not have exchanged that situation for any besides heaven itself.

"Oh, my dear friends, let us live to *Christ*, and lay ourselves wholly out for him whilst we live; and then, when health and life forsake us, he will be the strength of our heart, and our portion forever.

S. P."

About

* The last but one he ever preached, entitled, MOTIVES TO GRATITUDE. It was delivered on the day of national thanksgiving, and printed at the request of his own congregation.

About this time, the congregation at Cannon-ſtreet was ſupplied for ſeveral months by Mr. WARD, who is ſince gone as a miſſionary to India: here that amiable young man became intimately acquainted with Mr. Pearce, and conceived a moſt affectionate eſteem for him. In a letter to a friend, dated Jan. 5, 1799, he writes as follows:——

"I AM happy in the company of dear brother Pearce. I have ſeen more of God in him, than in any other perſon I ever knew. Oh how happy ſhould I be to live and die with him! When well, he preaches three times on a Lord's day, and two or three times in the week beſides. He inſtructs the young people in the principles of religion, natural philoſophy, aſtronomy, &c. They have a Benevolent Society, from the funds of which they diſtribute forty or fifty pounds a year to the poor of the congregation. They have a Sick Society for viſiting the afflicted in general: a Book Society at chapel: a Lord's-day School, at which betwixt two and three hundred children are inſtructed. Add to this, miſſionary buſineſs, viſiting the people, an extenſive correſpondence, two volumes of miſſion hiſtory preparing for the preſs, &c.; and then you will ſee ſomething of the ſoul of Pearce. He is every where venerated, though but a young man; and all the kind, tender, gentle affections, make him as a little child at the feet of his Saviour.

W. W."

In February, he rode to the opening of a Baptiſt meeting-houſe at Bedworth; but did not engage in any of the ſervices. Here ſeveral of his brethren ſaw him for the laſt time. Soon afterwards, writing to the compiler of theſe memoirs, he ſays,—"The Lord's day after I came home, I tried to ſpeak a little after

after ſermon. It inflamed my lungs afreſh, produced phlegm, coughing, and ſpitting of blood. Perhaps I may never preach more. Well, the Lord's will be done. I thank him that ever he took me into his ſervice; and now, if he ſee fit to give me a diſcharge, I ſubmit."

During the above meeting, a word was dropped by one of his brethren which he took as a reflection, though nothing was farther from the intention of the ſpeaker. It wrought upon his mind, and in a few days after, he wrote as follows:——"Do you remember what paſſed at B——? Had I not been accuſtomed to receive *plain*, *friendly* remarks from you, I ſhould have thought that you meant to inſinuate a reproof. If you did, tell me plainly. If you did not, it is all at an end. You will not take my naming it unkind, although I ſhould be miſtaken, ſince affectionate explanations are neceſſary when ſuſpicions ariſe, to the preſervation of friendſhip; and I need not ſay that I hold the preſervation of your friendſhip in no ſmall acccount."

The above is copied, not only to ſet forth the ſpirit and conduct of Mr. Pearce in a caſe wherein he felt himſelf aggrieved, but to ſhew in how eaſy and amiable a manner thouſands of miſtakes might be rectified, and differences prevented, by a frank and timely explanation.

To Mr. COMFIELD, Northampton.

"*Birmingham, March* 4, 1799.

"I COULD wiſh my ſympathies to be as extenſive as human—I was going to ſay—(and why not?) as animal miſery. The very limited comprehenſion of the human

human intelligence forbids this indeed, and whilſt I am attempting to participate as far as the news of affliction reaches me, I find the ſame events do not often produce equal feelings. We meaſure our ſympathies, not by the cauſes of ſorrow, but by the ſenſibilities of the ſorrowful; hence I abound in feeling on *your* account. The ſituation of your family muſt have given diſtreſs to a preſident of any character; but in you it muſt have produced agonies. I know the tenderneſs of your heart: your feelings are delicately ſtrong. You muſt feel much, or nothing; and he that knows you, and does not feel much when you feel, muſt be a brute.

"May the fountain of mercy ſupply you with the cheering ſtream! May your ſorrow be turned into joy!

"I am ſure that I ought to value more than ever your friendſhip for me. You have remembered me, not merely in my affliction, but in your own. Our friendſhip, our benevolence muſt never be compared with that of Jeſus; but it is truly delightful to ſee the diſciple treading, though at a humble diſtance, in the footſteps of a Maſter, who, amidſt the tortures of crucifixion, exerciſed forgiveneſs to his murderers, and the tenderneſs of filial piety to a diſconſolate mother! When we realize the ſcene, How much do our imaginations embrace—the perſons—the circumſtances—the words—'Woman, behold thy Son; John, behold thy mother!'

S. P."

By the above letter, the reader will perceive, that while deeply afflicted himſelf, he felt in the tendereſt manner for the afflictions of others.

To

To Mr. FULLER.

March 23, 1799.

HE was now ſetting out for Plymouth; and after obſerving the great danger he was ſuppoſed to be in, with reſpect to a conſumption, he adds,—"But thanks be to God, who giveth my heart the victory, let my poor body be conſumed, or preſerved. In the thought of *leaving*, I feel a momentary gloom; but in the thought of *going*, a heavenly triumph.

'Oh to grace how great a debtor!'

"Praiſe God with me, and for me, my dear brother, and let us not mind dying any more than ſleeping. No, no; let every Chriſtian ſing the loudeſt, as he gets the neareſt to the preſence of his God.—Eternally yours in Him, who hath waſhed us both in his blood.

S. P."

To Mr. MEDLEY, London.

UNDER the ſame date, he ſays,—"My affliction has been rendered ſweet, by the ſupports and ſmiles of Him whom I have ſerved in the goſpel of his Son. He hath delivered, he doth deliver, and I truſt that he will yet deliver. Living or dying, all is well for ever. Oh what ſhall I render to the Lord!"

It ſeems, that in order to avoid wounding Mrs. P.'s feelings, he deferred the ſettlement of his affairs till he arrived at Briſtol; from whence he wrote to his friend, Mr. King, requeſting him to become an executor. Receiving a favourable anſwer, he replied as follows:—

"*Briſtol, April* 6, 1799.

"YOUR letter, juſt received, affected me too much, with feelings both of ſympathy and gratitude, to remain unanſwered a ſingle poſt. Moſt heartily do I thank you for accepting a ſervice, which friendſhip alone can render agreeable in the moſt ſimple caſes. Should that ſervice demand your activities at an early period, may no unforeſeen occurrence increaſe the neceſſary care! But may the Father of the fatherleſs, and Judge of the widows, ſend you a recompenſe into your own boſom, equal to all that friendſhip, to which, under God, I have been ſo much indebted in life, and repoſing on whoſe boſom, even death itſelf loſes part of its gloom. In you, my children will find another father —in you, my wife another huſband. Your tenderneſs will ſympathize with the one, under the moſt diſtreſſing ſenſibilities; and your prudent counſels be a guide to the others, through the unknown mazes of inexperienced youth. Enough——bleſſed God! My ſoul proſtrates, and adores thee for ſuch a friend.

S. P."

To Mr. FULLER.

"*Plymouth, April* 18, 1799.

"THE laſt time that I wrote to you was at the cloſe of a letter ſent to you by brother Ryland. I did not like that poſtſcript form; it looked ſo card-like as to make me fear that you would deem it unbrotherly. After all, perhaps you thought nothing about it; and my anxieties might ariſe only from my weakneſs, which ſeems to be conſtantly increaſing my ſenſibilities. If ever I felt love in its tenderneſs for my friends, it has been ſince my affliction. This, in great meaſure, is no more than the love of 'publicans and harlots, who love thoſe that love them.' I never conceived myſelf by a hundred degrees ſo intereſted in

in the regards of my friends, as this season of affliction has manifested I was; and therefore, so far from claiming any 'reward' for loving them in return, I should account myself a monster of ingratitude, were it otherwise. Yet there is something in affliction itself, which, by increasing the delicacy of our feelings, and detaching our thoughts from the usual round of objects which present themselves to the mind when in a state of health, may be easily conceived to make us susceptible of stronger, and more permanent impressions of an affectionate nature.

"I heard at Bristol, that you and your friends had remembered me in your prayers, at Kettering. Whether the Lord whom we serve may see fit to answer your petitions on my account, or not, may they at least be returned into your own bosoms!

"For the sake of others, I should be happy, could I assure you that my health was improving. As to myself, I thank God, that I am not without a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better. I find that neither in sickness nor in health, I can be so much as I wish like Him whom I love. 'To die is gain:' Oh to gain that state, those feelings, that character, which perfectly accord with the mind of Christ, and are attended with the full persuasion of his complete and everlasting approbation! I want no heaven but this; and to gain this, most gladly would I this moment expire. But if to abide in the flesh be more needful for an individual of my fellow-men,—Lord, let thy will be done; only let Christ be magnified by me, whether in life or death!

"The weather has been so wet and windy since I have been at Plymouth, that I could not reasonably expect to be much better; and I cannot say that I am much worse. All the future is uncertain. Profes-

sional

sional men encourage me; but frequent returns appear, and occasional discharges of blood check my expectations. If I speak but for two minutes, my breast feels as sore as though it were scraped with a rough-edged razor; so that I am mute all the day long, and have actually learned to converse with my sister by means of our fingers.

"I thank you for yours of April 4th, which I did not receive till the 12th, the day that I arrived at Plymouth. On the 16th, a copy of yours to brother Ryland came to hand, to which I should have replied yesterday, but had not leisure. I am happy and thankful for your success. May the Lord himself pilot the *Criterion* safely to Calcutta river!

"Unless the Lord work a miracle for me, I am sure that I shall not be able to attend the Olney meeting. It is to my feelings a severe anticipation; but how can I be a Christian, and not submit to God?

S. P."

To Mr. Wm. WARD.

"*Plymouth, April* 22, 1799.

"MOST affectionately do I thank you for your letter, so full of information, and of friendship. To our common Friend, who is gone into heaven, where he ever sitteth at the right hand of God for us, I commend you. Whether I die, or live, God will take care of you till he has ripened you for the common salvation. Then shall I meet my dear brother Ward again; and who can tell how much more interesting our intercourse in heaven will be made by the scenes that most distress our poor spirits here. Oh, had I none to live for, I had rather die than live, that I may be at once like Him whom I love. But while

while he insures me Grace—why should I regret the delay of Glory! No: I will wait his will, who performeth all things for me.

"My dear brother, had I strength, I should rejoice to acquaint you with the wrestlings and the victories, the hopes and the fears, the pleasures and the pangs, which I have lately experienced. But I must forbear. All I can now say is, that God hath done me much good by all, and made me very thankful for all he has done.

"Alas! I shall see you no more. I cannot be at Olney on the 7th of May. The journey would be my death; but the Lord whom you serve will be with you then, and for ever. My love to all the dear assembled saints, who will give you their benedictions at that solemn season.

"Ever yours,

S. P."

To Dr. RYLAND.

"*Plymouth, April* 24, 1799.

"Very dear brother,

"MY health is in much the same state as when I wrote last, excepting that my muscular strength rather increases, and my powers of speaking seem less and less every week. I have, for the most part, spoken only in whispers for several days past; and even these seem too much for my irritable lungs. My father asked me a question to-day; he did not understand me when I whispered; so I was obliged to utter *one word*; and one word *only*, a little louder, and that brought on a soreness, which I expect to feel till bed time.

"I am

"I am ſtill looking out for fine weather: all here is cold and rainy. We have had but two or three fair and warm days ſince I have been here; then I felt better. I am perfectly at a loſs even to gueſs what the Lord means to do with me; but I deſire to commit my ways to him, and be at peace. I am going to-day about five miles into the country (to Tamerton,) where I ſhall await the will of God concerning me.

"I knew not of any Committee-meeting of our Society to be held reſpecting Mr. Marſhman and his wife. I have therefore ſent no vote, and indeed it is my happineſs that I have full confidence in my brethren, at this important criſis, ſince cloſe thinking or much writing always increaſes my fever, and promotes my complaint.

"My dear brother, I hope you will correſpond much with Kettering. I uſed to be a medium, but God has put me out of the way. I could weep that I can ſerve him no more: and yet I fear ſome would be tears of pride. Oh! for perfect likeneſs to my humble Lord!

S. P."

To Mr. KING.

"*Tamerton, May 2, 1799.*

"——— GIVE my love to all the dear people at Cannon-ſtreet. Oh pray that He who afflicts, would give me patience to endure. Indeed, the ſtate of ſuſpenſe in which I have been kept ſo long, requires much of it; and I often exclaim, ere I am aware, 'Oh my dear people! Oh my dear family! When ſhall I be reſtored to you again!' The Lord forgive all the ſin of my deſires! At times I feel a ſweet

sweet and perfect calm, and wish ever to live under the influence of a belief in the *goodness* of God, and of all his plans, and all his works.

S. P."

The reader has seen how much he regretted being absent from the solemn designation of the missionaries at Olney. He however addressed the following lines to Mr. Fuller, which were read at the close of that meeting, to the dissolving of nearly the whole assembly in tears :—

"*Tamerton, May* 2, 1799.

"————OH that the Lord, who is unconfined by place or condition, may copiously pour out upon you all the rich effusions of his Holy Spirit on the approaching day! My most hearty love to each missionary, who may then encircle the throne of grace. Happy men! happy women! you are going to be fellow-labourers with Christ himself! I congratulate—I almost envy you; yet I love you, and can scarcely now forbear dropping a tear of love as each of your names passes across my mind. Oh what promises are yours; and what a reward! Surely heaven is filled with double joy, and resounds with unusual acclamations at the arrival of each missionary there. Oh be faithful, my dear brethren, my dear sisters, be faithful unto death, and all this joy is yours! Long as I live, my imagination will be hovering over you in Bengal; and should I die, if separate spirits be allowed a visit to the world they have left, methinks mine would soon be at Mudnabatty, watching your labours, your conflicts, and your pleasures, whilst you are always abounding in the work of the Lord.

S. P."

To

To Dr. RYLAND.

"*Plymouth, May* 14, 1799.

"My dear brother,

"YOURS of the 11th inſtant I have juſt received, and thank you for your continued concern for your poor unworthy brother.

"I have ſuffered much in my health ſince I wrote to you laſt, by the increaſe of my feveriſh complaint, which filled me with heat and horror all night, and in the day ſometimes almoſt ſuffocated me with the violence of its paroxyſms. I am extremely weak, and now that warm weather which I came into Devon to ſeek, I dread as much as the cold, becauſe it excites the fever. I am happy, however, in the Lord. I have not a wiſh to live or die, but as he pleaſes. I truly enjoy the goſpel of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and would not be without his divine atonement, wherein to reſt my ſoul, for ten thouſand worlds. I feel quite weaned from earth, and all things in it. Death hath loſt his ſting, the grave its horrors; and the attractions of heaven, I had almoſt ſaid, are ſometimes violent.

'Oh to grace how great a debtor!'

"But I am wearied. May all grace abound towards my dear brother, and his affectionate

S. P."

To the CHURCH in Cannon-ſtreet.

"*Plymouth, May* 31, 1799.

"TO the dear people of my charge, the flock of Chriſt, aſſembling in Cannon-ſtreet, Birmingham; their afflicted but affectionate Paſtor, preſents his love in Chriſt Jeſus, the great Shepherd of the ſheep.

"My

"My dearest, dearest friends and brethren,

"SEPARATED as I have been a long time from you, and during that time of separation, having suffered much both in body and mind, yet my heart has still been with you, participating in your sorrows, uniting in your prayers, and rejoicing with you in the hope of that glory, *to* which divine faithfulness has engaged to bring us, and *for* which our heavenly Father, by all his providences, and by every operation of his Holy Spirit, is daily preparing us.

"Never, my dear brethren, did I so much rejoice in our being made 'partakers of the heavenly calling,' as during my late afflictions. The sweet thoughts of glory, where I shall meet my dear Lord Jesus, with all his redeemed ones, perfectly freed from all that sin which now burdens us, and makes us groan from day to day, —this transports my soul, whilst out of weakness I am made strong, and at times am enabled to glory even in my bodily infirmities, that the power of Christ, in supporting when flesh and heart fail, may the more evidently rest upon me. Oh, my dear brethren and sisters! let me, as one alive almost from the dead, let me exhort you to stand fast in that blessed gospel, which for ten years I have now preached among you: —the gospel of the grace of God; the gospel of free, full, everlasting salvation, founded on the sufferings and death of *God manifest in the flesh*. Look much at this all-amazing scene!

'Behold! a God descends and dies,
To save my soul from gaping hell;'

And then say whether any poor broken-hearted sinner need be afraid to venture his hopes of salvation on such a sacrifice; especially, since He who is thus 'mighty to save,' hath said, that 'whosoever cometh to him he will in no wise cast out.' You, beloved, who have found the pease-speaking virtue of this blood

blood of atonement, muſt not be ſatisfied with what you have already known or enjoyed. The only way to be conſtantly happy, and conſtantly prepared for the moſt awful changes which we muſt all experience, is to be conſtantly *looking* and *coming* to a dying Saviour: renouncing all our own worthineſs; cleaving to the loving Jeſus as our all in all; giving up every thing, however valuable to our worldly intereſts, that claſhes with our fidelity to Chriſt; begging that of his fulneſs we may receive 'grace upon grace,' whilſt our faith actually *relies* on his power and faithfulneſs, for the full accompliſhment of every promiſe in his word that we plead with him, and guarding againſt every thing that might for a moment bring diſtance and darkneſs between your ſouls, and your precious Lord. If you *thus live*, (and oh that you may daily receive freſh life from Chriſt ſo to do!) 'the peace of God will keep your hearts and minds,' and you will be filled with 'joy unſpeakable and full of glory.'

"As a *Church*, you cannot conceive what pleaſure I have enjoyed in hearing that you are in peace; that you attend prayer-meetings; that you ſeem to be ſtirred up of late for the honour and proſperity of religion. Go on in theſe good ways, my beloved friends, and aſſuredly the God of peace will be with you. Yea, if after all I ſhould be taken entirely from you, yet God will ſurely viſit you, and never leave you, nor forſake you.

"As to my health, I ſeem on the whole to be ſtill mending, though but very ſlowly. The fever troubles me often, both by day and night; but my ſtrength increaſes. I long to ſee your faces in the fleſh; yea, when I thought myſelf near the gates of the grave, I wiſhed, if it were the Lord's will, to depart among thoſe whom I ſo much loved. But I am in good hands; and all muſt be right.

"I thank

"I thank both you and the congregation moſt affectionately, for all the kindneſs you have ſhewn, reſpecting me and my family, during my abſence. The Lord return it a thouſand fold! My love to every one, both old and young, rich and poor as though named. The Lord bleſs to your edification the occaſional miniſtry which you enjoy. I hope you regularly attend upon it, and keep together, as 'the horſes in Pharaoh's chariot.' I pray much for you: pray, ſtill pray for your very affectionate, though unworthy, paſtor,

S. P."

In a poſtſcript to Mr. King, he ſays, "I have made an effort to write this letter: my affections would take no denial; but it has brought on the fever."

It ſeems to have been about this time that he wrote the following lines, which have appeared in ſeveral periodical publications, but with many inaccuracies:——

HYMN IN A STORM.

"IN the floods of tribulation,
While the billows o'er me roll,
Jeſus whiſpers conſolation,
And ſupports my fainting ſoul.
Thus the lion yields me honey,
From the eater food is given;
Strengthen'd thus, I ſtill preſs forward;
Singing as I wade to heaven,—
Sweet affliction! ſweet affliction,
That brings Jeſus to my ſoul!

'Mid

'Mid the gloom the vivid lightnings
With increaſed brightneſs play;
'Mid the thornbrake, beauteous flow'rets
Look more beautiful and gay:
So, in darkeſt diſpenſations,
Doth my faithful LORD appear,
With his richeſt conſolations,
To re-animate and cheer.

Sweet affliction! ſweet affliction,
Thus to bring my Saviour near!

Floods of tribulation heighten,
Billows ſtill around me roar;
Thoſe that know not CHRIST—ye frighten;
But my ſoul defies your pow'r.
In the ſacred page recorded,
Thus his word ſecurely ſtands,—
"Fear not, I'm in trouble near thee,
Nought ſhall pluck thee from my hands."

Sweet affliction! ſweet affliction,
That to ſuch ſweet words lays claim!

All I meet I find aſſiſts me
In my path to heav'nly joy,
Where, though trials now attend me,
Trials never more annoy:
Wearing there a weight of glory,
Still the path I'll ne'er forget;
But, reflecting how it led me
To my bleſſed Saviour's ſeat,

Cry, Affliction! ſweet affliction!
Haſte! bring more to Jeſus' feet!"

Towards the latter end of May, when Mr. WARD, and his companions, were juſt ready to ſet ſail, a conſultation concerning Mr. Pearce was held on board the *Criterion*, in which all the miſſionaries, and ſome of

of the members of the Baptiſt Miſſionary Society were preſent. It was well known that he had for ſeveral years been engaged in preparing materials for a *Hiſtory of Miſſions*, to be compriſed in two volumes octavo: and as the ſending of the goſpel amongſt the heathens had ſo deeply occupied his heart, conſiderable expectations had been formed by religious people, of his producing an intereſting work on the ſubject. The queſtion now was, Could not this performance be finiſhed by other hands, and the profits of it be appropriated to the benefit of Mr. Pearce's family? It was admitted by all, that this work would, partly from its own merits, and partly from the great intereſt which the author juſtly poſſeſſed in the public eſteem, be very productive; and that it would be a delicate and proper method of enabling the religious public, by ſubſcribing liberally to it, to afford ſubſtantial aſſiſtance to the family of this excellent man. The reſult was, that one of the members of the Society addreſſed a letter to Mr. Pearce's relations, at Plymouth, requeſting them to conſult him as he ſhould be able to bear it, reſpecting the ſtate of his manuſcripts; and to inquire whether they were in a condition to admit of being finiſhed by another hand; deſiring them alſo to aſſure him, for his preſent relief concerning his dear family, that whatever the hand of friendſhip could effect on their behalf, ſhould be accompliſhed. The anſwer, though it left no manner of hope as to the accompliſhment of the object, yet is ſo expreſſive of the reigning diſpoſitions of the writer's heart, as an affectionate huſband, a tender father, a grateful friend, and a ſincere Chriſtian, that it cannot be unintereſting to the reader:—

"*Tamerton, June* 24, 1799.

"TO uſe the common introduction of 'dear brother,' would fall ſo far ſhort of my feelings towards a friend,

a friend, whose uniform conduct has ever laid so great a claim to my affection and gratitude; but whose recent kindness,—kindness in *adversity*—kindness to my *wife*—kindness to my *children*——kindness that would go far to 'smooth the bed of death,' has overwhelmed my whole soul in tender thankfulness, and engaged my everlasting esteem. I know not how to begin. . . . 'Thought is poor, and poor expression:' The *only* thing that lay heavy on my heart, when in the nearest prospect of eternity, was the future situation of my family. I had but a comparatively small portion to leave behind me, and yet that little was the *all* that an amiable woman, delicately brought up, and, through mercy, for the most part comfortably provided for since she entered on domestic life,—with five babes to feed, clothe, and educate, had to subsist on. Ah, what a prospect! Hard and long I strove to realize the promises made to the widows and the fatherless; but *these alone* I could not fully rest on and enjoy. For my own part, God was indeed very gracious. I was willing, I hope, to linger in suffering, if I might thereby most glorify him, and death was an angel whom I longed to come and embrace me, 'cold' as his embraces are. But how could I leave those who were dearest to my heart in the midst of a world, in which, although thousands now professed friendship for me, and, on my account, for mine; yet after my decease, would, with few exceptions, soon forget my widow and my children among the crowds of the needy and distressed.—It was at this moment of painful sensibility that *your heart* meditated a plan to remove my anxieties;—a plan too that would involve much personal labour before it could be accomplished. 'Blessed be God, who put it into thy heart, and blessed be thou.' May the blessing of the widow and the fatherless rest on you and yours for ever. Amen and amen!

" You

"You will regret perhaps that I have taken up so much room respecting yourself, but I have scarcely gratified the shadow of my wishes. Excuse then on the one hand, that I have said so much, and accept on the other, what remains unexpressed.

"My affections and desires are among my dear people at Birmingham; and unless I find my strength increase here, I purpose to set out for that place in the course of a fortnight, or at most a month. The journey, performed by short stages, may do me good: if not, I expect when the winter comes to sleep in peace; and it will delight my soul to see them once more before I die. Besides, I have many little arrangements to make among my books and papers, to prevent confusion after my decease. Indeed, till I get home, I cannot fully answer your kind letter; but I fear that my materials consist so much in references, which none but myself would understand, that a second person could not take it up, and prosecute it. I am still equally indebted to you for a proposal so generous, so laborious.

"Rejoice with me, that the blessed gospel still 'bears my spirits up.' I am become familiar with the thoughts of dying. I have taken my leave often of the world; and thanks be to God, I do it *always* with *tranquillity*, and *often* with *rapture*. Oh, what grace, what grace it was, that ever called me to be a Christian! What would have been my present feelings, if I were going to meet God with all the filth and load of my sin about me! But God in my nature hath put my sin away, taught me to love him, and long for his appearing. Oh, my dear brother, how consonant is *everlasting praise* with such a great salvation!

S. P."

After

After this, another letter was addreſſed to Mr. Pearce, informing him more particularly that the above propoſal did not originate with an individual, but with ſeveral of the brethren who dearly loved him, and had conſulted on the buſineſs; and that it was no more than an act of juſtice to one who had ſpent his life in ſerving the public; alſo requeſting him to give directions by which his manuſcripts might be found and examined, leſt he ſhould be taken away before his arrival at Birmingham. To this he anſwered as follows:

"*Plymouth, July* 6, 1799.

"I NEED not repeat the growing ſenſe I have of your kindneſs, and yet I know not how to forbear.

"I cannot direct Mr. K—— to *all* my papers, as many of them are in books from which I was making extracts; and if I could, I am perſuaded that they are in a ſtate too confuſed, incorrect, and unfiniſhed, to ſuffer you or any other friend to realize your kind intentions.

"I have poſſeſſed a tenacious memory. I have begun one part of the hiſtory; read the neceſſary books; reflected; arranged; written, perhaps, the introduction; and then, truſting to my recollection, with the reviſal of the books as I ſhould want them, have employed myſelf in getting materials for another part, &c. Thus, till my illneſs, the volumes exiſted in my head,—my books were at hand, and I was on the eve of writing them out, when it pleaſed God to make me pauſe: and, as cloſe thinking has been ſtrongly forbidden me, I dare ſay, that were I again reſtored to health, I ſhould find it neceſſary to go over much of my former reading to refreſh memory.

"It is now Saturday. On Monday next we propoſe ſetting out on our return. May the Lord proſper our way!

way! Accept the sincere affection, and the ten thousand thanks, of your brother in the Lord,

S. P."

As the manuscripts were found to be in such a state, that no person, except the author himself, could finish them, the design was necessarily dropped. The public mind, however, was deeply impressed with Mr. Pearce's worth, and that, which the friendship of a few could not effect, has since been amply accomplished by the liberal exertions of many.

To Mr. BIRT.

"*Birmingham, July* 26, 1799.

"IT is not with common feelings that I begin a letter to *you*. Your name brings so many interesting circumstances of my life before me, in which your friendship has been so uniformly and eminently displayed, that now, amidst the imbecilities of sickness, and the serious prospect of another world, my heart is overwhelmed with gratitude, whilst it glows with affection,—an affection which eternity shall not annihilate, but improve.

"We reached Bristol on the Friday after we parted from you, having suited our progress to my strength and spirits. We staid with Bristol friends till Monday, when we pursued our journey, and went comfortably on, till the uncommonly rough road from Tewkesbury to Evesham quite jaded me; and I have not yet recovered from the excessive fatigue of that miserable ride. At Alcester we rested a day and a half, and, through the abundant goodness of God, we safely arrived at Birmingham on Friday evening, the 19th of July.

"I feel an undiſturbed tranquillity of ſoul, and am cheerfully waiting the will of God. My voice is gone, ſo that I cannot whiſper without pain; and of this circumſtance I am at times moſt ready to complain. For, to ſee my dear and amiable Sarah look at *me*, and then at the *children*, and at length bathe her face in tears, without my being able to ſay one kind word of comfort,——Oh!!..... Yet the Lord ſupports me under this alſo; and I truſt will ſupport me to the end.

S. P."

To Mr. ROCK.

July 28, 1799.

"————I AM now to all appearance within a few ſteps of eternity. In Chriſt I am ſafe. In him I am happy. I truſt we ſhall meet in heaven.

S. P."

To R. BOWYER, Eſq.

" *Birmingham, Auguſt* 1, 1799.

"MUCH diſappointed that I am not releaſed from this world of ſin, and put in poſſeſſion of the pleaſures enjoyed by the ſpirits of juſt men made perfect, I once more addreſs my dear fellow heirs of that glory which ere long ſhall be revealed to us all.

"We returned from Devon laſt Friday week. I was exceedingly weak, and for ſeveral days afterwards got rapidly worſe. My friends compelled me to try another phyſician. I am ſtill told that I ſhall recover. Be that as it may, I wiſh to have my own will annihilated, that the will of the *Lord* may be done. Through his abundant grace, I have been, and ſtill am

am happy in my ſoul; and I truſt my prevailing deſire is, that living or dying I may be the Lord's.

S. P."

To R. BOWYER, Eſq.

On his having ſent him a print of Mr. SCHWARTZ, *the Miſſionary on the Malabar coaſt.*

" *Birmingham, Aug.* 16, 1799.

"ON three accounts was your laſt parcel highly acceptable. It repreſented a man, whom I have long been in the habit of loving and revering; and whoſe character and labours I intended, if the Lord had not laid his hand upon me by my preſent illneſs, to have preſented to the public in Europe, as he himſelf preſented them to the millions of Aſia.—The execution bearing ſo ſtrong a likeneſs to the original, heightened its value. And then, the hand from whence it came, and the friendſhip it was intended to expreſs, add to its worth.

S. P."

To Mr. FULLER.

" *Birmingham, Aug.* 19, 1799.

"THE doctor has been making me worſe and weaker for three weeks. In the middle of the laſt week he ſpoke confidently of my recovery: but to-day he has ſeen fit to alter his plans; and if I do not find a ſpeedy alteration for the better, I muſt have done with all phyſicians, but Him, who 'healeth the broken in heart.'

" For

"For some time after I came home, I was led to believe my case to be consumptive, and then thinking myself of a certainty near the kingdom of heaven, I rejoiced hourly in the delightful prospect.

"Since then, I have been told that I am not in a dangerous way; and though I give very little credit to such assertions in this case, yet I have found my mind so taken up with earth again, that I seem as though I had another soul. My spiritual pleasures are greatly interrupted, and some of the most plaintive parts of the most plaintive Psalms seem the only true language of my heart. Yet, 'Thy will be done,' I trust, prevails; and if it be the Lord's will that I linger long, and suffer much, Oh let him give me the patience of hope, and still, his will be done.—I can write no more. This is a whole day's work; for it is only after tea that for a few minutes I can sit up, and attend to any thing.

S. P."

From the latter end of August, and all through the month of September to the tenth of October, *the day on which he died*, he seems to have been unable to write.—He did not, however, lose the exercise of his mental powers; and though in the last of the above letters he complains of darkness, it appears that he soon recovered that peace and joy in God, by which his affliction, and even his life, were distinguished.

Four excellent letters, addressed to Dr. Ryland, Mr. Pope, and Mr. King, appear at the end of his funeral sermon, published by Dr. Ryland, together with various short sentences, which he dropped during the last five or six weeks of his life. And as the readers of the Sermon will probably wish

to

to have it bound up with the Memoirs, both are connected together for that purpose.

A little before he died, he was visited by Mr. Medley, of London, with whom he had been particularly intimate on his first coming to Birmingham. Mr. Pearce was much affected at the sight of his friend; and continued silently weeping for nearly ten minutes, holding and pressing his hand. After this, he spoke, or rather, whispered as follows:—"This sick bed is a Bethel to me: it is none other than the house of God, and the gate of heaven. I can scarcely express the pleasures that I have enjoyed in this affliction. The nearer I draw to my dissolution, the happier I am. It scarcely can be called an affliction, it is so counterbalanced with joy. You have lost your pious father: tell me how it was."—Here Mr. Medley informed him of particulars. He wept much at the recital, and especially at hearing of his last words,—"Home, Home!" Mr. Medley telling him of some temptations he had lately met with, he charged him to keep near to God. "Keep close to God," said he, "and nothing will hurt you!"

The following familiar compositions, which were found amongst Mr. Pearce's papers, appear to have been written at distant intervals:—

'*Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours*,' 1 Cor. i. 2.

"SWEET are the gifts which gracious Heav'n
On true Believers pours;
But the best gift is grace to know
That Jesus Christ is *ours*.

Our

Our Jesus! what rich drops of bliss
Descend in copious show'rs,
When ruin'd sinners, such as we,
By faith can call him *ours*.

Differ we may in age and state,
Learning and mental pow'rs,
But all the saints may join and shout,
Dear Jesus! thou art *ours*.

Let those who know our Jesus not,
Delight in earth's gay flow'rs;
We, glorying in our better lot,
Rejoice that HE is *ours*.

When hope, with elevated flight,
Tow'rds heav'n in rapture tow'rs,
'Tis this supports our ventrous wing,
We know that Christ is *ours*.

Though providence, with dark'ning sky,
On things terrestrial lours,
We rise superior to the gloom
When singing, Christ is *ours*.

Time, which this world, with all its joys,
With eager haste devours,
May take inferior things away,
But Jesus still is *ours*.

Haste then, dull time, and terminate
Thy slow revolving hours;
We wish, we pray, we long, we pant
In Heav'n to call him OURS!"

"*Plain*

"Plain Dealing with a Backsliding Heart."

"STUPID soul, to folly cleaving,
Why has God no more thy heart;
Why art thou thy mercies leaving;
Why must thou with Jesus part?

Is there in this world existing
Aught with Jesus to compare;
Yea, can heav'n itself produce one
Half so lovely, half so fair?

Ah! look back upon the season,
When thy soul the Saviour chose
For thy portion, and thy spirit
Did with his salvation close.

Ah! remember thine espousals;
Didst thou not with Christ agree,
Leaving all thy former lovers,
His and his alone to be?

In his love thy pow'rs exulting,
What did all below appear;
Was there aught seem'd worth possessing,
Worthy of a hope or fear?

When thy heart, by grace instructed,
Learnt the world to disesteem,
And to Christ for all resorted,
Was there not enough in him?

Yes; thou know'st thy joyful spirit
Knew no unfulfill'd desire;
Longing still, and still receiving
Fuel for the heav'nly fire.

Why

Why then, tell me, now so lifeless,
Why this heav'nly fountain leave;
Why to broken cisterns seeking,
Cisterns that no water give?

Doth not disappointment follow
Ev'ry step that leads from God;
Have not piercing thorns and briers
Shown their points through all the road?

Recollect, 'tis thus, the Saviour
Says he will thy soul reclaim,
With weeping and with supplication,
Humbly offer'd through his name."

"*Invocation to returning Peace.*"

"SWEET Peace, return! thy wonted bliss restore,
Bid war's insatiate scourge prevail no more;
Sheath the dread sword that deals destruction round,
And ev'ry ear salute with tranquil sound!
Oh! bid oppression from each land retire,
And Briton's sons with halcyon bliss inspire;
Remove the mis'ry of domestic woes,
And hush the tumult of contending foes!
Let each, with patriot zeal, *all* strife disown;
Be one their wishes, and their motives *one!*
The widow's tears, her sad corroding care,
The orphan's sighs, assist this ardent pray'r:
May he on whom propitious fortune smiles,
Relieve that breast which adverse fate beguiles!
May virtue's impulse ev'ry purpose move,
To acts of goodness, UNIVERSAL LOVE!"

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

GENERAL OUTLINES OF HIS CHARACTER.

TO develop the character of any perſon, it is neceſſary to determine what was his governing principle. If this can be clearly aſcertained, we ſhall eaſily account for the tenor of his conduct.

The governing principle in Mr. Pearce, beyond all doubt, was HOLY LOVE.

To mention this, is ſufficient to prove it to all who knew him. His friends have often compared him to *that diſciple whom Jeſus loved.* His religion was that of the heart. Almoſt every thing he ſaw, or heard, or read, or ſtudied, was converted to the feeding of this divine flame. Every ſubject that paſſed through his hands, ſeemed to have been caſt into this mould. Things, that to a merely ſpeculative mind would have furniſhed matter only for curioſity, to him afforded materials for devotion. His ſermons were generally the effuſions of his heart, and invariably aimed at the hearts of his hearers.

For the juſtneſs of the above remarks, I might appeal not only to the letters which he addreſſed to his friends, but to thoſe which his friends addreſſed to him. It is worthy of notice how much we are influenced in our correſpondence by the turn of mind of the perſon we addreſs. If we write to a humourous character, we ſhall generally find that what we write, perhaps without being conſcious of it, will be interſperſed with pleaſantries: or if to one of a very ſerious caſt, our letters will be more ſerious than uſual. On this principle, it has been thought, we may form ſome judgment

judgment of our own ſpirit by the ſpirit in which our friends addreſs us. Theſe remarks will apply with ſingular propriety to the correſpondence of Mr. Pearce. In looking over the firſt volume of *Periodical Accounts of the Baptiſt Miſſion*, the reader will eaſily perceive the moſt affectionate letters from the miſſionaries are thoſe which are addreſſed to him.

It is not enough to ſay of this affectionate ſpirit that it formed a prominent feature in his character: it was rather the life-blood that animated the whole ſyſtem. He ſeemed, as one of his friends obſerved, to be baptized in it. It was *holy love* that gave the tone to his general deportment: as a ſon, a ſubject, a neighbour, a Chriſtian, a miniſter, a paſtor, a friend, a huſband, and a father, he was manifeſtly governed by this principle; and this it was that produced in him that lovely uniformity of character, which conſtitutes the true *beauty of holineſs*.

By the grace of God he was what he was; and to the honour of grace, and not for the glory of a ſinful worm, be it recorded. Like all other men, he was the ſubject of a depraved nature. He felt it, and lamented it, and longed to depart, that he might be freed from it: but certainly we have ſeldom ſeen a character, taking him altogether, "whoſe excellencies were ſo many, and ſo uniform, and whoſe imperfections were ſo few." We have ſeen men riſe high in contemplation, who have abounded but little in action —We have ſeen zeal mingled with bitterneſs, and candour degenerate into indifference; experimental religion mixed with a large portion of enthuſiaſm, and what is called rational religion void of every thing that intereſts the heart of man—We have ſeen ſplendid talents tarniſhed with inſufferable pride, ſerioufneſs with melancholy, cheerfulneſs with levity, and great attainments in religion with uncharitable cenſo-

rioufneſs

riousneſs towards men of low degree :—but we have not ſeen theſe things in our brother Pearce.

There have been few men in whom has been united a greater portion of the contemplative and the active ; holy zeal, and genuine candour ; ſpirituality, and rationality ; talents, that attracted almoſt univerſal applauſe, and the moſt unaffected modeſty ; faithfulneſs in bearing teſtimony againſt evil, with the tenderest compaſſion to thē ſoul of the evil doer ; fortitude that would encounter any difficulty in the way of duty, without any thing boiſterous, noiſy, or overbearing ; deep ſeriouſneſs, with habitual cheerfulneſs ; and a conſtant aim to promote the higheſt degrees of piety in himſelf and others, with a readineſs to hope the beſt of the loweſt ; not *breaking the bruiſed reed*, nor *quenching the ſmoking flax*.

He loved the divine character as revealed in the Scriptures.—To adore God, to contemplate his glorious perfections, to enjoy his favour, and to ſubmit to his diſpoſal, were his higheſt delight. "I felt," ſays he, when contemplating the hardſhips of a miſſionary life, "that were the univerſe deſtroyed, and I the only being in it beſides God, HE is fully adequate to my complete happineſs ; and had I been in an African wood, ſurrounded with venomous ſerpents, devouring beaſts, and ſavage men ; in ſuch a frame, I ſhould be the ſubject of perfect peace, and exalted joy. Yes, O my God ! thou haſt taught me that THOU ALONE art worthy of my confidence ; and, with this ſentiment fixed in my heart, I am freed from all ſolicitude about my temporal concerns. If thy preſence be enjoyed, poverty ſhall be riches, darkneſs light, affliction proſperity, reproach my honour, and fatigue my reſt !"

He loved the goſpel.—The truths which he believed and taught, dwelt richly in him, in all wiſdom and ſpiritual

ſpiritual underſtanding. The reader will recollect how he went over the great principles of Chriſtianity, examining the grounds on which he reſted, in the firſt of thoſe days which he devoted to ſolemn faſting and prayer in reference to his becoming a miſſionary;* and with what ardent affection he ſet his ſeal anew to every part of divine truth as he went along.

If ſalvation had been of works, few men, according to our way of eſtimating characters, had a fairer claim: but, as he himſelf has related, he could not meet the king of terrors in this armour.† So far was he from placing any dependence on his own works, that the more he did for God, the leſs he thought of it in ſuch a way. "All the ſatisfaction I wiſh for here," ſays he, "is to be doing my heavenly Father's will. I hope I have found it my meat and drink to do his work; and can ſet to my ſeal, that the pureſt pleaſures of human life ſpring from the humble obedience of faith. It is a good ſaying, 'We cannot do too much for God, nor truſt in what we do too little.' I find a growing conviction of the neceſſity of a free ſalvation. The more I do for God, the leſs I think of it; and am progreſſively aſhamed that I do no more."

Chriſt crucified was his darling theme, from firſt to laſt. This was the ſubject on which he dwelt at the outſet of his miniſtry among the Coldford colliers, when, "He could ſcarcely ſpeak for weeping, nor they hear for interrupting ſighs and ſobs;" this was the burden of the ſong when addreſſing the more poliſhed and crouded audiences at Birmingham, London, and Dublin; this was the grand motive exhibited in ſermons for the promotion of public charities; and this was the rock on which he reſted all his hopes, in the proſpect of death. It is true, as we have ſeen, he was ſhaken for a time by the writings of a *Whitby*, and

* See Chap. II. p. 46. † Chap. I. p. 18.

and of a *Prieſtley:* but this tranſient heſitation, by the overruling grace of God, tended only to eſtabliſh him more firmly in the end. "Bleſſed be his dear name," ſays he under his laſt affliction, "who ſhed his blood for me. He helps me to rejoice at times with joy unſpeakable. Now I ſee the value of the religion of the croſs. It is a religion for a dying ſinner. It is all the moſt guilty, and the moſt wretched can deſire. Yes, I taſte its ſweetneſs, and enjoy its fulneſs, with all the gloom of a dying bed before me; and far rather would I be the poor emaciated and emaciating creature that I am, than be an emperor with every earthly good about him, but without a God."

Notwithſtanding this, however, there were thoſe in Birmingham, and other places, who would not allow that *he preached the goſpel.* And if by the goſpel were meant the doctrine taught by Mr. *Huntington*, Mr. *Bradford*, and others who follow hard after them, it muſt be granted he did not. If the fall and depravity of man operate to deſtroy his accountableneſs to his Creator; if his inability to obey the law, or comply with the goſpel, be of ſuch a nature as to excuſe him in the neglect of either; or if not, yet if Chriſt's coming under the law, frees believers from all obligation to obey its precepts; if goſpel invitations are addreſſed only to the regenerate; if the illuminating influences of the Holy Spirit conſiſt in revealing to us the ſecret purpoſes of God concerning us, or impreſſing us with the idea that we are the favourites of Heaven; if believing ſuch impreſſions be Chriſtian faith, and doubting of their validity unbelief; if there be no ſuch thing as progreſſive ſanctification, nor any ſanctification inherent, except that of the illumination before deſcribed; if wicked men are not obliged to do any thing beyond what they can find in their hearts to do, nor good men to be holy beyond what they actually are;

are; and if these things constitute the *gospel*, Mr. Pearce certainly *did not* preach it.—But if man, whatever be his depravity, be necessarily a free agent, and accountable for all his dispositions and actions; if gospel invitations be addressed to men not as elect, nor as non-elect; but as sinners exposed to the righteous displeasure of God; if Christ's obedience and death rather increase, than diminish our obligations to love God and one another; if faith in Christ be a falling in with God's way of salvation, and unbelief a falling out with it; if sanctification be a progressive work, and so essential a branch of our salvation, as that without it no man shall see the Lord; if the Holy Spirit instruct us in nothing by his illuminating influences but what was already revealed in the scriptures, and which we should have perceived but for that we loved darkness rather than light; and if he inclines us to nothing but what was antecedently right, or to such a spirit as every intelligent creature ought at all times to have possessed—then Mr. Pearce *did* preach the gospel; and that which his accusers call by this name is *another gospel*, and *not the gospel of Christ*.

Moreover, If the doctrine taught by Mr. Pearce be not the gospel of Christ, and that which is taught by the above writers and their adherents be, it may be expected that the effects produced will in some degree correspond with this representation. And is it evident to all men who are acquainted with both, and who judge impartially, that the doctrine taught by Mr. Pearce is productive of *hatred*, *variance*, *emulations*, *wrath*, *strife*, *railings*, *evil surmisings*, and *perverse disputings*; that it renders those who embrace it *lovers of their own selves*, *covetous*, *boasters*, *proud*, *false accusers*, *fierce*, *despisers of those that are good*; while that of his adversaries promotes *love*, *joy*, *peace*, *long-suffering*, *gentleness*, *goodness*, *faith*, *meekness*, and *temperance*? . . . .

WHY EVEN OF YOURSELVES JUDGE YE NOT WHAT IS RIGHT?

RIGHT? . . . . YE SHALL KNOW THEM BY THEIR FRUITS.

Mr. Pearce's ideas of preaching *human obligation* may be seen in the following extract from a letter, addressed to a young minister who was sent out of the church of which he was pastor. "You request my thoughts how a minister should preach *human obligation*. I would reply, do it *extensively*, do it *constantly*; but withal, do it *affectionately*, and *evangelically*. I think, considering the general character of our hearers, and the state of their mental improvement, it would be time lost to argue much from the data of natural religion. The best way is, perhaps, to express duties in scripture language, and enforce them by evangelical motives; as, the example of Christ—the ends of his suffering and death—the consciousness of his approbation—the assistance he has promised—the influence of a holy conversation on God's people, and on the people of the world—the small returns we at best can make for the love of Jesus—and the hope of eternal holiness. These form a body of arguments, which the most simple may understand, and the most dull may feel. Yet I would not neglect on *some occasions* to shew the obligations of man to love his Creator—the reasonableness of the divine law—and the natural tendency of its commands to promote our own comfort, the good of society, and the glory of God. These will serve to *illuminate*, but, after all, it is *the gospel of the grace of God* that will most effectually *animate*, and impel to action."

Mr. Pearce's affection to the doctrine of the cross was not merely nor principally on account of its being a system which secured his own safety. Had this been the case, he might, like others, whose religion originates and terminates in self-love, have been delighted with the idea of the grace of the Son, but it would have been at the expense of all complacency in the

the righteous government of the Father. He might have admired something which he accounted the gospel, as saving him from misery; but he could have discerned no loveliness in the divine law as being holy, just and good, nor in the mediation of Christ as doing honour to it. That which in his view constituted the glory of the gospel was, that God is therein revealed as *the just God and the Saviour—just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus.*

He was a lover of good men.—He was never more in his element than when joining with them in spiritual conversation, prayer and praise. His heart was tenderly attached to the people of his charge; and it was one of the bitterest ingredients in his cup during his long affliction, to be cut off from their society. When in the neighbourhood of Plymouth, he thus writes to Mr. King, one of the deacons—"Give my love to all the dear people. O pray, that He who afflicts would give me patience to endure. Indeed, the state of suspense in which I have been kept so long, requires much of it; and I often exclaim ere I am aware, O my dear people! O my dear family, when shall I return to you again!" He conscientiously dissented from the Church of England, and from every other national establishment of religion, as inconsistent with what he judged the scriptural account of the nature of Christ's kingdom: nor was he less conscientious in his rejection of infant baptism, considering it as having no foundation in the holy scriptures, and as tending to confound the church and the world; yet he embraced with brotherly affection great numbers of godly men both in and out of the establishment. His spirit was truly catholic: he loved all who loved our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. "Let us pray," said he in a letter to a friend, "for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper who love—

not

not this part, or the other, but who love—HER—that is, the whole body of Chriſt."

He bare good will to all mankind.—It was from this principle that he ſo ardently deſired to go and preach the goſpel to the heathen. And even under his long affliction, when at times he entertained hopes of recovery, he would ſay, "My ſoul pants for uſefulneſs more extenſive than ever: I long to become an apoſtle to the world!" The errors and ſins of men wrought much in him in a way of pity. He knew that they were culpable in the ſight of God: but he knew alſo that he himſelf was a ſinner, and felt that they were entitled to his compaſſion. His zeal for the divinity and atonement of his Saviour, never appeared to have operated in a way of unchriſtian bitterneſs againſt thoſe who rejected theſe important doctrines; and though he was ſhamefully traduced by profeſſors of another deſcription as a mere legal preacher, and his miniſtry held up as affording no food for the ſouls of believers, and could not but feel the injury of ſuch miſrepreſentations; yet he does not appear to have cheriſhed unchriſtian reſentment; but would at any time have laid himſelf out for the good of his worſt enemies. It was his conſtant endeavour to promote as good an underſtanding between the different congregations in the town as the nature of their different religious ſentiments would admit. The cruel bitterneſs of many people againſt Dr. Prieſtley and his friends, at and after the Birmingham riots, was affecting to his mind. Such methods of oppoſing error he abhorred. His regard to mankind made him lament the conſequences of war: but while he wiſhed and prayed for peace to the nations, and eſpecially to his native country, he had no idea of turbulently contending for it. Though friendly to civil and religious liberty, he ſtood aloof from the fire of political contention. In an excellent Circular Letter to the churches of

of the Midland Aſſociation in 1794, of which he was the writer, he thus expreſſes himſelf—"Have as little as poſſible to do with the world. Meddle not with political controverſies. An inordinate purſuit of theſe, we are ſorry to obſerve, has been as a canker-worm at the root of vital piety; and cauſed the love of many, formerly zealous profeſſors to wax cold. The Lord reigneth; it is our place to *rejoice in his government*, and quietly wait for the ſalvation of God. The eſtabliſhment of his kingdom will be the ultimate end of all thoſe national commotions which terrify the earth. The wrath of man ſhall praiſe him, and the remainder of wrath he will reſtrain." If he could write in this manner in 1794, his ſeeing a hopeful undertaking, in which he had taken a more than common intereſt, blaſted by this ſpecies of folly in 1796, would not leſſen his averſion to it.* From this time more than ever, he turned his whole attention to the promoting of the kingdom of Chriſt, cheriſhing and recommending a ſpirit of contentment and gratitude for the civil and religious advantages that we enjoyed. Such were the ſentiments inculcated in the laſt ſermon that he printed, and the laſt but one that he preached.† His dear young friends who are gone to India will never forget how earneſtly he charged them by letter, when confined at Plymouth, to conduct themſelves in all civil matters as peaceable and obedient ſubjects to the government under which they lived, in whatever country it might be their lot to reſide.

It was love that tempered his faithfulneſs with ſo large a portion of tender concern for the good of thoſe whoſe conduct he was obliged to cenſure.—He could not bear them that were evil, but would ſet himſelf againſt them with

* See Periodical Accounts of the Baptiſt Miſſion, Vol. I. p. 257.

† See page 113. Note.

with the greateſt firmneſs: yet it were eaſy to diſcover the pain of mind with which this neceſſary part of duty was diſcharged. It is well remembered how he conducted himſelf towards certain preachers in the neighbourhood, who, wandering from place to place, corrupted and embroiled the churches; whoſe conduct he knew to be as diſhonourable as their principles were looſe and unſcriptural: and when requeſted to recite particulars in his own defence, his fear and tenderneſs for character, his modeſt reluctance to accuſe perſons older than himſelf, and his deep concern that men engaged in the Chriſtian miniſtry, ſhould render ſuch accuſations neceſſary, were each conſpicuous, and proved to all preſent, that the work of an accuſer was to him a *ſtrange work*.

It was love that expanded his heart, and prompted him to labour in ſeaſon and out of ſeaſon for the ſalvation of ſinners.—This was the ſpring of that conſtant ſtream of activity by which his life was diſtinguiſhed. His conſcience would not ſuffer him to decline what appeared to be right. "I dare not refuſe, he would ſay, leſt I ſhould ſhrink from duty. Unjuſtifiable eaſe is worſe than the moſt difficult labours to which duty calls." To perſons who never entered into his views and feelings, ſome parts of his conduct, eſpecially thoſe which relate to his deſire of quitting his country that he might preach the goſpel to the heathen, will appear extravagant: but no man could with greater propriety have adopted the language of the apoſtle, *Whether we be beſide ourſelves, it is to God; or whether we be ſober, it is for your cauſe; for the love of Chriſt conſtraineth us.*

He was frequently told that his exerciſes were too great for his ſtrength: but ſuch was the ardour of his heart, "He could not die in a better work." When he went up into the pulpit to deliver his laſt ſermon,

ſermon, he thought he ſhould not have been able to get through; but when he got a little warm, he felt relieved, and forgot his indiſpoſition, preaching with equal fervour and freedom as when in perfect health. While he was laid aſide, he could not forbear hoping that he ſhould ſome time reſume his delightful work; and knowing the ſtrength of his feelings to be ſuch that it would be unſafe to truſt himſelf, he propoſed for a time to write his diſcourſes, that his mind might not be at liberty to overdo his debilitated frame.

All his counſels, cautions, and reproofs, appear to have been the effect of love.—It was a rule dictated by his heart, no leſs than by his judgment, to diſcourage all evil ſpeaking: nor would he approve of juſt cenſure unleſs ſome good and neceſſary end were to be anſwered by it. Two of his diſtant friends being at his houſe together, one of them, during the abſence of the other, ſuggeſted ſomething to his diſadvantage. He put a ſtop to the converſation by anſwering, "He is here, take him aſide, and tell him of it by himſelf: you may do him good."

If he perceived any of his acquaintance bewildered in fruitleſs ſpeculations, he would in an affectionate manner endeavour to draw off their attention from theſe mazes of confuſion to the ſimple doctrine of the croſs. A ſpecimen of this kind of treatment will be ſeen in the letter, No. I. towards the cloſe of this chapter.

He was affectionate to all, but eſpecially towards the *riſing generation*. The youth of his own congregation, of London, and of Dublin, have not forgot his melting diſcourſes which were particularly addreſſed to them. He took much delight in ſpeaking to the children, and would adapt himſelf to their capacities, and expoſtulate with them on the things which belonged

longed to their everlasting peace. While at Plymouth he wrote thus to one of his friends, "O how should I rejoice were there a speedy prospect of my returning to my great and *little* congregations." Nor was it by preaching only that he sought their eternal welfare: several of his letters are addressed to young persons. See No. II. and III. towards the close of this chapter.

With what joy did he congratulate one of his most intimate friends, on hearing that three of the younger branches of his family had apparently been brought to take the Redeemer's yoke upon them. "Thanks, thanks, thanks be to God," said he, "for the enrapturing prospects before you as a *father*, as a *Christian father* especially. What, *three* of a family! and these three at once! O the heights, and depths, and lengths, and breadths of his unfathomable grace. My soul feels joy unspeakable at the blessed news. Three immortal souls secured for eternal life! Three rational spirits preparing to grace Immanuel's triumphs, and sing his praise! Three examples of virtue and goodness; exhibiting the genuine influences of the true religion of Jesus before the world—Perhaps three mothers training up to lead three future families in the way to heaven. Oh what a train of blessings do I see in this event! Most sincerely do I participate with my dear friend, in his pleasures and in his gratitude."

Towards the close of life, writing to the same friend, he thus concludes his letter—"Present our love to dear Mrs. S—— and the family, especially those whose hearts are engaged to seek the Lord and his goodness. O tell them they will find him good all their lives, supremely good on dying beds, but best of all in glory."

In

In his visits to the sick he was singularly useful. His sympathetic conversation, affectionate prayers, and endearing manner of recommending to them a compassionate Saviour, frequently operated as a cordial to their troubled hearts. A young man of his congregation was dangerously ill. His father living at a distance, was anxious to hear from him; and Mr. Pearce, in a letter to the minister on whose preaching the father attended, wrote as follows—"I feel for the anxiety of Mr. V——, and am happy in being at this time a Barnabas to him. I was not seriously alarmed for his son till last Tuesday, when I expected from every symptom, and the language of his apothecary, that he was nigh unto death. But to our astonishment and joy, a surprising change has since taken place. I saw him yesterday apparently in a fair way for recovery. His mind, for the first part of his illness, was sometimes joyful, and almost constantly calm; but when at the worst, suspicions crouded his mind; he feared he had been an hypocrite. I talked, and prayed, and wept with him. One scene was very affecting; both he and his wife appeared like persons newly awakened. They never felt *so strongly* the importance of religion before. He conversed about the tenderness of Jesus to broken-hearted sinners; and whilst we spoke, it seemed as though he came and began to heal the wound. It did me good, and I trust not unavailing to them. They have since been for the most part happy; and a very pleasant interview I had with them on the past day."

Every man must have his seasons of relaxation. In his earlier years he would take strong bodily exercise. Of late, he occasionally employed himself with the microscope, and in making a few philosophical experiments. "We will amuse ourselves with philosophy," said he to a philosophical friend, "but Jesus shall be our teacher." In all these exercises he seems never

never to have loſt ſight of God; but would be diſcovering ſomething in his works that ſhould furniſh matter for praiſe and admiration. His mind did not appear to have been unfitted, but rather aſſiſted, by ſuch purſuits for the diſcharge of the more ſpiritual exerciſes, into which he would fall at a proper ſeaſon, as into his native element. If in company with friends, and the converſation turned upon the works of nature, or art, or any other ſubject of ſcience, he would cheerfully take a part in it, and when occaſion required, by ſome eaſy and pleaſant tranſition, direct it into another channel. An ingenious friend once ſhewed him a model of a machine which he thought of conſtructing, and by which he hoped to be able to produce a perpetual motion. Mr. Pearce having patiently inſpected it, diſcovered where the operation would ſtop, and pointed it out. His friend was convinced, and felt, as may be ſuppoſed, rather unpleaſant at his diſappointment. He conſoled him; and a prayer-meeting being at hand, ſaid to this effect, "We may learn from hence our own inſufficiency, and the glory of that Being, who is *wonderful in counſel, and excellent in working*: let us go and worſhip Him."

His mild and gentle diſpoſition, not apt to give or take offence, often won upon perſons in matters wherein at firſt they have ſhewn themſelves averſe. When collecting for the Baptiſt miſſion, a gentleman who had no knowledge of him, or of the conductors of that undertaking, made ſome objections, on the ground that the Baptiſts had little or nothing to ſay to the unconverted. This objection Mr. Pearce attempted to remove, by alleging that the parties concerned in this buſineſs were entirely of another mind. I am glad to hear it, ſaid the gentleman, but I have my fears. Then pray, ſir, ſaid Mr. Pearce, do not give till you are ſatisfied. Why I aſſure you, replied the

the other, I think the Methodiſts more likely to ſucceed than you; and ſhou'd feel more pleaſure in giving them ten guineas than you one. If you give them twenty guineas, ſir, ſaid Mr. Pearce, we ſhall rejoice in their ſucceſs; and if you give us one, I hope it will not be miſapplied. The gentleman ſmiled, and gave him four.

His figure to a ſuperficial obſerver would at firſt ſight convey nothing very intereſting; but on cloſe inſpection, his countenance would be acknowledged to be a faithful index to his ſoul. Calm, placid, and, when in the pulpit eſpecially, full of animation, his appearance was not a little expreſſive of the intereſt he felt in the eternal welfare of his audience; his eyes beaming benignity, and ſpeaking in the moſt impreſſive language his willingneſs to *impart, not only the goſpel of God, but his own ſoul alſo.*

His imagination was vivid, and his judgment clear; he reliſhed the elegancies of ſcience, and felt alive to the moſt delicate and refined ſentiments: yet theſe were things on account of which he does not appear to have valued himſelf. They were rather his amuſements than his employment.

His addreſs was eaſy and inſinuating; his voice pleaſant, but ſometimes overſtrained in the courſe of his ſermon; his language chaſte, flowing, and inclining to the florid: this laſt, however, abated as his judgment ripened. His delivery was rather ſlow than rapid; his attitude graceful, and his countenance in almoſt all his diſcourſes approaching to an affectionate ſmile. He never appears, however, to have ſtudied what are called the graces of pulpit action; or, whatever he had read concerning them, it was manifeſt that he thought nothing of them, or of any other of the ornaments of ſpeech, at the time. Both his

his action and language were the genuine expressions of an ardent mind, affected, and sometimes deeply, with his subject. Being rather below the common stature, and disregarding, or rather, I might say, disapproving every thing pompous in his appearance, he has on some occasions been prejudged to his disadvantage: but the song of the nightingale is not the less melodious for his not appearing in a gaudy plumage. His manner of preparing for the pulpit may be seen in a letter addressed to Mr. C—— of *L*——, who was sent out of his church; and which may be of use to others in a similar situation. See No. IV. towards the close of this chapter.

His ministry was highly acceptable to persons of education: but he appears to have been most in his element when preaching to the poor. The feelings which he himself expresses when instructing the colliers, appear to have continued with him through life. It was his delight to carry the glad tidings of salvation into the villages wherever he could find access and opportunity. And as he fought the good of their souls, so he both laboured and suffered to relieve their temporal wants; living himself in a style of frugality and self-denial, that he might have whereof to give to them that needed.

Finally, *He possessed a large portion of real happiness.*—There are few characters whose enjoyments, both natural and spiritual, have risen to so great a height. He dwelt in love: and *he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.* Such a life must needs be happy. If his religion had originated and terminated in self-love, as some contend the whole of religion does, his joys had been not only of a different nature, but far less extensive than they were. His interest was bound up with that of his Lord and Saviour. Its afflictions

flictions were his affliction, and its joys his joy. The grand object of his desire was, to *see the good of God's chosen, to rejoice in the gladness of his nation, and to glory with his inheritance.* "What pleasures do those lose," says he, "who have no interest in God's gracious and holy cause!"*

If an object of joy presented itself to his mind, he would delight in multiplying it by its probable or possible consequences. Thus it was, as we have seen, in his congratulating his friend on the conversion of three of his children; nd thus it was when speaking of a people who divided into two congregations, not from discord, but from an increase of numbers; and who generously united in erecting a new and additional place of worship—"These liberal souls are subscribing," said he, "in order to support a religion, which, as far as it truly prevails, will render others as liberal as themselves."

His heart was so much formed for social enjoyment that he seems to have contemplated the heavenly state under this idea with peculiar advantage. This was the leading theme of a discourse from Rev. v. 9——12, which he delivered at a meeting of ministers at Arnsby, April 18, 1797; and of which his brethren retain a lively remembrance. On this pleasing subject he dwells also in a letter to his dear friend *Birt.*—"I had much pleasure a few days since, in meditating on the affectionate language of our Lord to his sorrowful disciples; *I go to prepare a place for you.* What a plenitude of consolation do these words contain; what a sweet view of heaven as a place of *society.* It is *one place* for us all; that place where his glorified body is, there all his followers shall assemble, to part no more. Where He is, there we shall be also. Oh blessed anticipation! There shall be Abel, and all the martyrs;

* See the Letter to Dr. Ryland, May, 30, 1796, p. 65.

martyrs; Abraham, and all the patriarchs; Isaiah, and all the prophets; Paul, and all the apostles; Gabriel, and all the angels; and above all, JESUS, and all his ransomed people! Oh to be amongst the number! My dear brother, let us be strong in the Lord. Let us realize the bliss before us. Let our faith bring heaven itself near, and feast, and live upon the scene. Oh what a commanding influence would it have upon our thoughts, passions, comforts, sorrows, words, ministry, prayers, praises, and conduct. What manner of persons should we be in all holy conversation and godliness!"

In many persons, the pleasures imparted by religion are counteracted by a gloomy constitution: but it was not so in him. In his disposition they met with a friendly soil. Cheerfulness was as natural to him as breathing; and this spirit, sanctified by the grace of God, gave a tincture to all his thoughts, conversation, and preaching. He was seldom heard without tears; but they were frequently tears of pleasure. No levity, no attempts at wit, no aiming to excite the risibility of an audience, ever disgraced his sermons. Religion in him was habitual seriousness, mingled with sacred pleasure, frequently rising into sublime delight, and occasionally overflowing with transporting joy.

LETTERS

LETTERS

REFERRED TO IN THIS CHAPTER.

No. I.

To a young man whose mind he perceived was bewildered with fruitless speculations.

"THE conversation we had on our way to —— so far interested me in your religious feelings, that I find it impossible to satisfy my mind, till I have expressed my ardent wishes for the happy termination of your late exercises, and contributed my mite to the promotion of your joy in the Lord. A disposition more or less to "skepticism" I believe is common to our nature, in proportion as opposite systems and jarring opinions, each supported by a plausibility of argument, are presented to our minds: and with some qualification I admit Robinson's remark, "That he who never doubted never believed." While examining the grounds of persuasion, it is right for the mind to hesitate. Opinions ought not to be prejudged any more than criminals. Every objection ought to have its weight; and the more numerous and forcible objections are, the more cause shall we finally have for the triumph, 'Magna est veritas & prevalebit;' but there are two or three considerations, which have no small weight with me in relation to religious controversies.

"The first is, The importance of truth. It would be endless to write on truth in general. I confine my views to what I deem the leading truth in the New Testament,—*The atonement made on behalf of sinners by the Son of God; the doctrine of the Cross; Jesus Christ and him crucified.* It surely cannot be a matter of small concern

concern whether the Creator of all things, out of mere love to rebellious men, exchanged a throne for a croſs, and thereby reconciled a ruined world to God. If this be not true, how can we reſpect the bible as an inſpired book, which ſo plainly attributes our ſalvation to the grace of God, *through the redemption which is in Chriſt Jeſus?* And if we diſcard the bible, what can we do with prophecies, miracles, and all the power of evidence on which, as on adamantine pillars, its authority abides? Surely the infidel has more to reject than the believer to embrace. That book, then, which we receive, not as the word of man, but as the word of God, not as the religion of our anceſtors, but on the invincible conviction which attends an impartial inveſtigation of its evidences; that book reveals a truth of the higheſt importance to man, conſonant to the opinions of the earlieſt ages, and the moſt enlightened nations, perfectly conſiſtent with the Jewiſh economy, as to its ſpirit and deſign, altogether adapted to unite the equitable and merciful perfections of the Deity in the ſinner's ſalvation, and above all things calculated to beget the moſt eſtabliſhed peace, to inſpire with the livelieſt hope, and to engage the heart and life in habitual devotedneſs to the intereſt of morality and piety. Such a doctrine I cannot but venerate; and to the *Author* of ſuch a doctrine, my whole ſoul labours to exhauſt itſelf in praiſe.

> 'Oh the ſweet wonders of the Croſs,
> Where God my ſaviour lov'd and dy'd!'

Forgive, my friend, forgive the tranſport of a ſoul compelled to feel where it attempts only to explore. I cannot on *this* ſubject control my paſſions by the laws of logic. *God forbid that I ſhould glory, ſave in the Croſs of Chriſt Jeſus my Lord!*

"Secondly, I conſider man as a depraved creature; ſo depraved, that his judgment is as dark as his appetites are

are ſenſual; wholly dependent therefore on God for religious light, as well as true devotion: yet ſuch a dupe to pride, as to reject every thing, which the narrow limits of his comprehenſion cannot embrace; and ſuch a ſlave to his paſſions, as to admit no law but ſelf-intereſt for his government. With theſe views of human nature, I am perſuaded we ought to ſuſpect our own deciſions whenever they oppoſe truths too ſublime for our underſtandings, or too pure for our luſts. 'To err' on this ſide, indeed, 'is human;' wherefore the wiſe man ſaith, 'He that truſteth to his own heart is a fool.' Should, therefore, the evidence be only equal on the ſide of the goſpel of Chriſt, I ſhould think, with this allowance, we ſhould do well to admit it.

"Thirdly, If the goſpel of Chriſt be true, it ſhould be heartily embraced. We ſhould yield ourſelves to its influence without reſerve. We muſt come to a point, and reſolve to be either infidels, or Chriſtians. To know the power of the ſun, we ſhould expoſe ourſelves to his rays; to know the ſweetneſs of honey, we muſt bring it to our palates. Speculations will not do in either of theſe caſes; much leſs will it in matters of religion. *My Son*, ſaith God, *give me thine heart!*

"Fourthly, A humble admiſſion of the light we already have, is the moſt effectual way to a full conviction of the truth of the doctrine of Chriſt. *If any man will* DO *his will, he ſhall know of his doctrine whether it be of God.* If we honour God as far as we know his will, he will honour us with further diſcoveries of it. Thus ſhall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord; thus, thus ſhall you, my dear friend, become aſſured that there is ſalvation in no other name than that of Jeſus Chriſt; and thus from an inward experience of the quickening influences of his Holy Spirit, you will join the admiring church, and ſay of Jeſus, 'This

'This is my beloved, this is my friend; he is the chiefeſt among ten thouſand, he is altogether lovely.' Yes, I yet hope, I expect to ſee you rejoicing in Chriſt Jeſus; and appearing as a living witneſs that he is faithful who hath ſaid, 'Seek and ye ſhall find; aſk and receive, that your joy may be full.'

S. P."

In another letter to the ſame correſpondent, after congratulating himſelf that he had diſcovered ſuch a mode of killing noxious inſects as ſhould put them to the leaſt pain, and which was characteriſtic of the tenderneſs of his heart, he proceeds as follows:—"But enough of nature: how is my brother *as a Chriſtian?* We have had ſome intereſting moments in converſation on the methods of grace, that grace whoſe influence reaches to the day of adverſity, and the hour of death; ſeaſons when, of every thing beſide it may be ſaid, Miſerable comforters are they all! My dear friend, we will amuſe ourſelves with philoſophy, but Chriſt ſhall be our teacher; Chriſt ſhall be our glory; Chriſt ſhall be our portion. Oh that we may be enabled 'to comprehend the heights, and depths, and lengths, and breadths, and to know the love of Chriſt which paſſeth knowledge!'

Affectionately yours,

S. P."

No. II.

To a young gentleman of his acquaintance, who was then studying physic at Edinburgh.

"DID my dear friend P—— know with what sincere affection, and serious concern, I almost daily think of him, he would need no other evidence of the effect which his last visit, and his subsequent letters have produced. Indeed there is not a young man in the world, in earlier life than myself, for whose universal prosperity I am so deeply interested. Many circumstances I can trace, on a review of the past fourteen years, which have contributed to beget and augment affection and esteem: and I can assure you that *every interview*, and *every letter*, still tend to consolidate my regard.

"Happy should I be, if my ability to serve you at this important crisis of human life were equal to your wishes, or my own. Your situation demands all the aid, which the wisdom and prudence of your friends can afford, that you may be directed not only to the most worthy objects of pursuit, but also to the most effectual means for obtaining them. In your professional character it is impossible for me to give you any assistance. If any general observations I can make should prove at all useful, I shall be richly rewarded for the time I employ in their communication.

"I thank you sincerely for the freedom wherewith you have disclosed the peculiarities of your situation, and the views and resolutions wherewith they have inspired you. I can recommend nothing better, my dear friend, than a *determined adherence* to the purposes you have already formed, respecting the intimacies you contract,

contract, and the associates you choose. In such a place as Edinburgh, it may be supposed, no description of persons will be wanting. Some so notoriously vicious, that their atrocity of character will have no small tendency to confirm your morals, from the odious contrast which their practices present to your view. Against these, therefore, I need not caution you. You will flee them as so many serpents, in whose breath is venom and destruction. More danger may be apprehended from those mixed characters, who blend the profession of philosophical refinement with the secret indulgence of those sensual gratifications, which at once exhaust the pocket, destroy the health, and debase the character.

"That morality is friendly to individual happiness, and to social order, no man, who respects his own conscience, or character, will have the effrontery to deny. Its avenues cannot, therefore, be too sacredly guarded, nor those principles which support a virtuous practice be too seriously maintained. But morality derives, it is true, its best, its only support, from the principles of religion. 'The fear of the Lord (said the wise man) is to hate evil.' He, therefore, who endeavours to weaken the sanctions of religion, to induce a skeptical habit, to detach my thoughts from an *ever present God*, and my hopes from a futurity of holy enjoyment, HE is a worse enemy than the man that meets me with the pistol and the dagger. Should my dear friend, then, fall into the company of those, whose friendship cannot be purchased but by the sacrifice of Revelation, I hope he will ever think such a price too great for the good opinion of men who blaspheme piety, and dishonour God. Deism is indeed the fashion of the day; and to be in the mode, you must quit the good old path of devotion as too antiquated for any but monks and hermits; so as you laugh at religion, that is enough to secure to you the

the company, and the applauſe, of the ſons of politeneſs. Oh that God may be a buckler and a ſhield to defend you from their aſſaults! Let but their private morals be inquired into, and if they may have a hearing, I dare engage they will not bear a favourable teſtimony to the good tendency of ſkepticiſm; and it may be regarded as an indiſputable axiom, That what is unfriendly to virtue is unfriendly to man.

"Were I to argue à poſteriori in favour of truth, I ſhould contend that thoſe principles muſt be true, which (firſt) correſponded with general obſervation—(ſecondly) tended to general happineſs—(thirdly) preſerved a uniform connexion between cauſe and effect, evil and remedy, in all ſituations.

"I would then apply theſe data to the principles held on the one ſide, by the deiſts; and on the other, by the believers in revelation. In the application of the *firſt*, I would refer to the ſtate of human nature. The deiſt contends for its purity, and powers. Revelation declares its depravity, and weakneſs. I compare theſe oppoſite declarations with the facts that fall under conſtant obſervation. Do I not ſee that there is a larger portion of vice in the world, than of virtue; that no man needs ſolicitation to evil, but every man a guard againſt it; and that thouſands bewail their ſubjection to luſts, which they have not power to ſubdue, whilſt they live in moral ſlavery, and cannot burſt the chain? Which principle then ſhall I admit? Will obſervation countenance the *deiſtical?* I am convinced to the contrary, and muſt ſay, I cannot be a deiſt without becoming a fool; and to exalt my reaſon, I muſt deny my ſenſes.

"I take the *ſecond* datum, and inquire, which tends moſt to general happineſs? To ſecure happineſs, three things are neceſſary:—*object*, *means*, and *motives*. The queſtion

queſtion is,—Which points out the *true ſource* of happineſs; which directs to the *beſt means* for attaining it; and which furniſhes me with the moſt *powerful motives* to induce my purſuit of it? If I take a deiſt for my tutor, he tells me that *fame* is the object; univerſal *accommodation of manners to intereſt*, the means; and *ſelf-love* the ſpring of action. Sordid teacher! From him I turn to *Jeſus*. His better voice informs me, that the ſource of felicity is the *friendſhip of my God*; that *love to my Maker*, and *love to man*, expreſſed in all the noble and amiable effuſions of devotion and benevolence, are the means; and that *the glory of God*, and *the happineſs of the univerſe*, muſt be my motives. Bleſſed Inſtructor, thy dictates approve themſelves to every illuminated conſcience, to every pious heart! Do they not, my dear P——, approve themſelves to yours?

"But I will not tire your patience by purſuing theſe remarks. Little did I think of ſuch amplification when I firſt took up my pen. Oh that I may have the joy of finding that theſe (at leaſt well meant) endeavours to eſtabliſh your piety have not been ungraciouſly received, nor wholly unprofitable to your mind! I am encouraged to theſe effuſions of friendſhip by that amiable *ſelf-diſtruſt* which your letter expreſſes; a temper not only becoming the earlier ſtages of life, but graceful in all its advancing periods.

"Unſpeakable ſatisfaction does it afford me to find that you are conſcious of the neceſſity of 'firſt' ſeeking aſſiſtance from heaven. Retain, my dear friend, this honourable, this equitable ſentiment. 'In all thy ways acknowledge God, and he ſhall direct thy paths.'

"I hope you will ſtill be cautious in your intimacies. You will gain more by a half-hour's intercourſe with God, than the friendſhip of the whole college

lege can impart. Too much acquaintance would be followed with a waſte of that precious time, on the preſent improvement of which, your future uſefulneſs and reſpectability in your profeſſion depend. Like the bee, you may do beſt by ſipping the ſweets of every flower; but remember, the ſweeteſt bloſſom is not the *hive*.

Yours very affectionately,

S. P."

"P. S. So many books have been publiſhed on the ſame ſubject as the manuſcript you helped me to copy, that I have not ſent it to the preſs."*

No. III.

To a young Lady at ſchool, Miſs A. H. a daughter of one of the members of his Church.

"I CANNOT deny myſelf the pleaſure, which this opportunity affords me, of expreſſing the concern I feel for your happineſs, ariſing from the ſincereſt friendſhip; a friendſhip, which the many amiable qualities you poſſeſs, together with the innumerable opportunities I have had of ſeeing them diſplayed, have taught me to form and perpetuate.

"It affords me inexpreſſible pleaſure to hear, that you are ſo happy in your preſent ſituation: a ſituation in which I rejoice to ſee you placed, becauſe it is not merely

* The compiler believes this was an anſwer to Mr. Peter Edward's *Candid Reaſons, &c.* He knows Mr. Pearce did write an anſwer to that performance. By the effrontery of the writer he has acknowledged he was at firſt a little ſtunned; but upon examining his arguments, found it no very difficult undertaking to point out their fallacy.

merely calculated to embelliſh the manners, but to profit the ſoul. I hope that my dear Ann, amidſt the various purſuits of an ornamental or ſcientific nature which ſhe may adopt, will not omit that firſt, that great concern, The dedication of her heart to God. To this, my dear girl, every thing invites you that is worthy of your attention. The dignity of a rational and immortal ſoul, the condition of human nature, the gracious truths and promiſes of God, the ſweetneſs and uſefulneſs of religion, the comfort it yields in affliction, the ſecurity it affords in temptation, the ſupports it gives in death, and the proſpects it opens of life everlaſting; all theſe conſiderations, backed with the uncertainty of life, the ſolemnity of judgment, the terrors of hell, and the calls of conſcience and of God, —all demand your heart for the *Bleſſed Jehovah*. This, and nothing ſhort of this, is true religion. You have often heard, and often *written* on religion: it is time you ſhould FEEL it now. Oh what a bleſſedneſs will attend your hearty ſurrender of yourſelf to the God and Father of men! Methinks I ſee all the angels of God rejoicing at the ſight, all the ſaints in heaven partaking of their joy; Jeſus himſelf, who died for ſinners, gazing on you with delight; your own heart filled with peace and joy in believing; and a thouſand ſtreams of goodneſs flowing from your renovated ſoul to refreſh the aged ſaint, and to encourage your fellow youth to ſeek firſt the kingdom of heaven, and preſs on to God. But Oh, ſhould I be miſtaken! Alas, alas, I cannot bear the thought. Oh thou Saviour of ſinners, and God of love! take captive the heart of my dear young friend, and make her truly willing to be wholly thine!

"If you can find freedom, do oblige me with a letter on the ſtate of religion in your own ſoul, and be aſſured of every ſympathy or advice that I am capable of feeling or giving.

Affectionately yours,

S. P.

No. IV.

To a young Minister, Mr. C——, of L———, on preparation for the pulpit.

"My dear brother,

"YOUR first letter gave me much pleasure. I hoped you would learn some useful lesson from the first Sabbath's disappointment. Every thing is good that leads us to depend more simply on the Lord. Could I choose my frames, I would say respecting industry in preparation for public work, as is frequently said respecting Christian obedience; I would apply as close as though I expected no help from the Lord, whilst I would depend on the Lord for assistance, as though I had never made any preparation at all.

"I rejoice much in every thing that affords you ground for solid pleasure. The account of the affection borne you by the people of God, was therefore a matter of joy to my heart, especially as I learnt from the person who brought your letter, that the friendship seemed pretty general.

"Your last has occasioned me some pain on your account, because it informs me that you have been 'exceedingly tried in the pulpit:' but I receive satisfaction again from considering, that the gloom of midnight precedes the rising day, not only in the natural world, but frequently also in the Christian minister's experience. Do not be discouraged, my dear brother: those whose labours God has been pleased most eminently to bless, have generally had their days of prosperity ushered in with clouds and storms. You are in the sieve; but the sieve is in our Saviour's hands; and he will not suffer any thing but the chaff to fall through,

through, let him winnow us as often as he may. No one at times, I think I may say, has been worse tried than myself, in the same manner as you express; though I must be thankful it has not been often.

"You ask direction of me, my dear brother. I am too inexperienced myself to be capable of directing others; yet if the little time I have been employed for God has furnished me with any thing worthy of communication, it will be imparted to no one with more readiness than to you.

"I should advise you when you have been distressed by hesitation, to reflect whether it arose from an inability to recollect your ideas, or to obtain words suited to convey them. If the former, I think these two directions may be serviceable: First, Endeavour to think *in a train.* Let one idea depend upon another in your discourses, as one link does upon another in a chain. For this end I have found it necessary to arrange my subjects in the order of time. Thus, for instance,—If speaking of the promises, I would begin with those which were suited to the earliest inquiries of a convinced soul; as, pardon, assistance in prayer, wisdom, &c.; then go to those parts of Christian experience which are usually subsequent to the former; as, promises of support in afflictions, deliverance from temptations, and perseverance in grace; closing with a review of those which speak of support in death, and final glory. Then all the varieties of description respecting the glory of heaven will follow in natural order; as, the enlargement of the understanding, purification of the affections, intercourse with saints, angels, and Christ himself, which will be *eternal:* thus beginning with the lowest marks of grace, and ascending step by step, you at last arrive in the fruition of faith. This mode is most natural, and most pleasing to the hearers, as well as assisting to the preacher: for

for one idea gives birth to another, and he can hardly help going forward regularly and easily.

"Secondly, Labour to *render your ideas transparent to yourself.* Never offer to introduce a thought, which you cannot *see through* before you enter the pulpit.—You have read in *Claude*, that the best preparative to preach from a subject, is to understand it: and I think Bishop Burnet says, No man properly understands any thing, who cannot at *any time* represent it to others.

"If your hesitation proceeds from a want of words, I should advise you—1. To *read good and easy authors; Dr. Watts especially.*—2. To *write a great part of your sermons*, and for a while get at least the leading ideas of every head of discourse by heart, enlarging only at the close of every thought.—3. Sometimes, as in the end of sermons, or when you preach in villages, *start off in preaching beyond all you have premeditated.* Fasten on some leading ideas; as, the solemnity of death, the awfulness of judgment, the necessity of a change of heart, the willingness of Christ to save, &c. Never mind how far you ramble from the point, so as you do not lose sight of it; and if your heart be any way warm, you will find some expressions then fall from your lips, which your imagination could not produce in an age of studious application.—4. *Divest yourself of all fear.* If you should break the rules of grammar, or put in, or leave out a word, and recollect at the end of the sentence the impropriety; unless it makes nonsense, or bad divinity, never try to mend it, but let it pass. If so, perhaps only a few would notice it; but if you stammer in trying to mend it, you will expose yourself to all the congregation.

"In addition to all I have said, you know where to look, and from whom to seek that wisdom and strength which

which only God can give. To him I recommend you, my dear brother, assuring you of my real esteem for you, and requesting you will not fail to pray for the least of saints, but

Yours affectionately,

S. P."

A MORNING SONG.

"GOD of our lives, our morning songs
To thee we cheerful raise;
Thy acts of love 'tis good to sing,
And pleasant 'tis to praise.

Guardian of man, thy wakeful eyes,
Nor sleep, nor slumber know:
Thine eyes pierce through the shades of night,
Intent on all below.

Sustain'd by thee, our op'ning eyes
Salute the morning light;
Secure I stand, unhurt by all
The arrows of the night.

My life renew'd, my strength repair'd,
To thee, my God, is due;
Teach me thy ways, and give me grace
My duty to pursue.

From ev'ry evil me defend,
But guard me most from sin;
Direct my going out, Oh Lord,
And bless my coming in!

Oh

Oh may thy holy fear command
Each action, thought, and word;
Then shall I sweetly close the day,
Approv'd of thee, my Lord."

AN EVENING SONG.

"AUTHOR of life, with grateful heart
My ev'ning song I'll raise;
But Oh, thy thousand thousand gifts
Exceed my highest praise.

What shall I render to thy care,
Which me this day has kept?
A thankful heart's the least return,
And this thou wilt accept.

Now night has spread her sable wings,
I would the day review;
My errors nicely mark, and see
What still I have to do.

What sins, or follies, holy God,
I may this day have done,
I would confess with grief, and pray
For pardon through thy Son.

Much of my precious time I've lost;
This foolish waste forgive:
By one day nearer brought to death,
May I begin to live!"

CONCLUDING

CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS.

THE great ends of Chriſtian Biography are inſtruction and example. By faithfully deſcribing the lives of men eminent for godlineſs, we not only embalm their memory, but furniſh ourſelves with freſh materials and motives for a holy life. It is abundantly more impreſſive to view the religion of Jeſus as operating in a living character, than to contemplate it abſtractedly. For this reaſon we may ſuppoſe the Lord the Spirit has condeſcended to exhibit firſt and principally, the life of Chriſt; and after his, that of many of his eminent followers. And for this reaſon, he by his holy influences ſtill furniſhes the church with now and then a ſingular example of godlineſs, which it is our duty to notice and record. There can be no reaſonable doubt that the life of Mr. Pearce ought to be conſidered as one of theſe examples. May that ſame divine Spirit who had manifeſtly ſo great a hand in forming his character, teach us to derive from it both inſtruction and edification!

First, *In him we may ſee the holy efficacy, and by conſequence, the truth of the Chriſtian religion.*—It was long ſince aſked, *Who is he that overcometh the world, but he who believeth that Jeſus is the Son of God?* This queſtion contained a challenge to men of all religions, who were then upon the earth. Idolatry had a great diverſity of ſpecies: every nation worſhipping its own gods, and in modes peculiar to themſelves: philoſophers alſo were divided into numerous ſects, each flattering itſelf that it had found the truth: even the Jews had their diviſions; their phariſees, ſadducees, and Eſſenes: but great as many of them were in deeds of divers kinds,

kinds, an apoſtle could look them all in the face, and aſk, *Who is he that overcometh the world?* The ſame queſtion might ſafely be aſked in every ſucceeding age. The various kinds of religions that ſtill prevail; the pagan, mahometan, jewiſh, papal, or proteſtant, may form the exteriors of man according to their reſpective models; but where is the man amongſt them, ſave the true believer in Jeſus, that overcometh the world? Men may ceaſe from particular evils, and aſſume a very different character; may lay aſide their drunkenneſs, blaſphemies, or debaucheries, and take up with a kind of monkiſh auſterity, and yet all amount to nothing more than an exchange of vices. The luſts of the fleſh will on many occaſions give place to thoſe of the mind; but to overcome the world is another thing. By embracing the doctrine of the Croſs, to feel not merely a dread of the conſequences of ſin, but a holy abhorrence of its nature; and by converſing with inviſible realities, to become regardleſs of the beſt, and fearleſs of the worſt, that this world has to diſpenſe;—this is the effect of genuine Chriſtianity, and this is a ſtanding proof of its divine original. Let the moſt inveterate enemy of revelation have witneſſed the diſintereſted benevolence of a Paul, a Peter, or a John, and whether he would own it, or not, his conſcience muſt have borne teſtimony that this is true religion. The ſame may be ſaid of Samuel Pearce: whether the doctrine he preached found a place in the *hearts* of his hearers, or not, his ſpirit and life muſt have approved itſelf to their *conſciences*.

Secondly, *In him we ſee how much may be done for God in a little time.*—If his death had been foreknown by his friends, ſome might have heſitated whether it was worth while for him to engage in the work of the miniſtry for ſo ſhort a period: yet, if we take a view of his labours, perhaps there are few lives productive of a greater portion of good. That life is

not

not always the longeſt which is ſpun out to the greateſt extent of days. The firſt of all lives amounted but to thirty-three years; and the moſt important works pertaining to that were wrought in the laſt three. There is undoubtedly a way of rendering a ſhort life a long one, and a long life a ſhort one, by filling or not filling it with proper materials. That time which is ſquandered away in ſloth, or trifling purſuits, forms a kind of blank in human life: in looking it over there is nothing for the mind to reſt upon; and a whole life ſo ſpent, whatever number of years it may contain, muſt appear upon reflection ſhort and vacant, in compariſon of one filled up with valuable acquiſitions, and holy actions. It is like the ſpace between us and the ſun, which, though immenſely greater than that which is traverſed in a profitable journey, yet being all empty ſpace, the mind goes over it in much leſs time, and without any ſatisfaction. If 'that life be long which anſwers life's great end,' Mr. Pearce may aſſuredly be ſaid to have come to his grave in a good old age. And might we not all do much more than we do, if our hearts were more in our work? Where this is wanting, or operates but in a ſmall degree, difficulties are magnified into impoſſibilities; a lion is in the way of extraordinary exertion; or if we be induced to engage in ſomething of this kind, it will be at the expenſe of a uniform attention to ordinary duties. But ſome will aſk, How are our hearts to be in our work? Mr. Pearce's heart was habitually in his; and that which kept alive the ſacred flame in him appears to have been,—The conſtant habit of converſing with divine truth, and walking with God in private.

Thirdly, In him we ſee, in clear and ſtrong colours, *to what a degree of ſolid peace and joy, true religion will raiſe us, even in the preſent world.*——A little religion, it has been juſtly ſaid, will make us miſerable; but

but a great deal will make us happy. The one will do little more than keep the conſcience alive, while our numerous defects and inconſiſtencies are perpetually furniſhing it with materials to ſcourge us: the other keeps the heart alive, and leads us to drink deep at the fountain of joy. Hence it is, in a great degree, that ſo much of the ſpirit of bondage, and ſo little of the ſpirit of adoption prevails among Chriſtians. Religious enjoyments with us are rather occaſional, than habitual; or if in ſome inſtances it be otherwiſe, we are ready to ſuſpect that it is ſupported in part by the ſtrange fire of enthuſiaſm, and not by the pure flame of ſcriptural devotion. But, in Mr. Pearce, we ſaw a devotion ardent, ſteady, pure, and perſevering; kindled, as we may ſay, at the altar of God, like the fire of the temple, it went not out by night nor by day. He ſeemed to have learnt that heavenly art, ſo conſpicuous among the primitive Chriſtians, of converting every thing he met with into materials for love, and joy, and praiſe. Hence he 'laboured,' as he expreſſes it, 'to exerciſe moſt love to God when ſuffering moſt ſeverely;' and hence he ſo affectingly encountered the billows that overwhelmed his feeble frame, crying,

> 'Sweet affliction, ſweet affliction,
> Singing as I wade to heaven.'

The conſtant happineſs that he enjoyed in God was apparent in the effects of his ſermons upon others. Whatever we feel ourſelves we ſhall ordinarily communicate to our hearers; and it has been already noticed, that one of the moſt diſtinguiſhing properties of his diſcourſes was,—that they inſpired the ſerious mind with the livelieſt ſenſations of happineſs. They deſcended upon the audience, not indeed like a tranſporting flood, but like a ſhower of dew, gently inſinuating itſelf into the heart, inſenſibly diſſipating its gloom, and gradually drawing forth the graces of faith, hope, love, and joy: while the countenance was brightened

ened almoſt into a ſmile, tears of pleaſure would riſe, and gliſten, and fall from the admiring eye.

What a practical confutation did his life afford of the ſlander ſo generally caſt upon the religion of Jeſus, that it fills the mind with gloom and miſery! No: leaving futurity out of the queſtion, the whole world of unbelievers might be challenged to produce a character from among them who poſſeſſed half his enjoyments.

Fourthly, From his example we are furniſhed with *the greateſt encouragement, while purſuing the path of duty, to place our truſt in God.*——The ſituation in which he left his family, we have ſeen already, was not owing to an indifference to their intereſt, or an improvident diſpoſition, or the want of opportunity to have provided for them; but to a ſteady and determined obedience to do what he accounted the will of God. He felt deeply for them, and we all felt with him, and longed to be able to aſſure him before his departure, that they would be amply provided for: but owing to circumſtances which have already been mentioned, this was more than we could do. This was a point in which he was called to *die in faith:* and indeed ſo he did. He appears to have had no idea of that flood of kindneſs, which, immediately after his deceaſe, flowed from the religious public: but he believed in God, and cheerfully left all with him. 'Oh that I could ſpeak,' ſaid he to Mrs. Pearce a little before his death, 'I would tell a world to truſt a faithful God. Sweet affliction; now it worketh glory, glory!' And when ſhe told him the workings of her mind, he anſwered, 'Oh truſt the Lord! If he lift up the light of his countenance upon you, as he has done upon me this day, all your mountains will become mole-hills. I feel your ſituation: I feel your ſorrows: but he who takes

takes care of ſparrows, will care for you and my dear children.'

The liberal contributions which have ſince been made, though they do not warrant miniſters in general to expect the ſame, and much leſs to neglect providing for their own families on ſuch a preſumption; yet they muſt need be conſidered as a ſingular encouragement, when we are ſatisfied that we are in the path of duty, to be inordinately 'careful for nothing, but in every thing, by prayer and ſupplication, with thankſgiving, to let our requeſts be made known unto God.'

Finally, In him we ſee that *the way to true excellence is not to affect eccentricity, nor to aſpire after the performance of a few ſplendid actions; but to fill up our lives with a ſober, modeſt, ſincere, affectionate, aſſiduous, and uniform conduct.*———Real greatneſs attaches to character; and character ariſes from a *courſe of action*. Solid reputation as a merchant ariſes not from a man's having made his fortune by a few ſucceſsful adventures; but from a courſe of wiſe economy, and honourable induſtry, which, gradually accumulating, advances by pence to ſhillings, and by ſhillings to pounds. The moſt excellent philoſophers are not thoſe who have dealt chiefly in ſplendid ſpeculations, and looked down upon the ordinary concerns of men as things beneath their notice; but thoſe who have felt their intereſts united with the intereſts of mankind, and bent their principal attention to things of real and public utility. It is much the ſame in religion. We do not eſteem a man for one, or two, or three good deeds, any farther than as theſe deeds are indications of the real ſtate of his mind. We do not eſtimate the character of Chriſt himſelf ſo much from his having given ſight to the blind, or reſtored Lazarus from the grave, as from his *going about* continually *doing good*.

Theſe

Theſe ſingle attempts at great things are frequently the efforts of a vain mind, which pants for fame, and has not patience to wait for it, nor diſcernment to know the way in which it is obtained. One purſues the ſhade, and it flies from him; while another turns his back upon it, and it follows him. The one aims at once to climb the rock, but falls ere he reaches the ſummit; the other walking round it, in purſuit of another object, gradually and inſenſibly aſcends till he reaches it: ſeeking the approbation of his God, he finds with it that of his fellow Chriſtians.

THE promised Presence of Christ with his People a Source of Consolation under the most painful bereavements.

A

SERMON

DELIVERED AT THE

Baptist Meeting-House, Cannon-Street, Birmingham,

ON

LORD'S DAY EVENING, OCT. 20, 1799;

Occasioned by the Death of

The Rev. *SAMUEL PEARCE*, A. M.

LATE PASTOR

OF THE CHURCH ASSEMBLING THERE;

Who died October 10, *in the* 34*th Year of his Age.*

By JOHN RYLAND, D. D.

To which is prefixed,

AN

ORATION

DELIVERED AT THE GRAVE, OCT. 16, 1799,

By the Rev. J. BREWER.

BOSTON:

PRINTED BY MANNING & LORING.

SERMON

PREACHED AT THE

ANNUAL MEETING OF THE

SOCIETY

FOR THE

PROPAGATION OF THE GOSPEL,

IN

FOREIGN PARTS,

AND

FOR THE ANNIVERSARY COMMEMORATION

OF

THE Rev. DAVID JAMES PEARCE, A.M.

LATE RECTOR

OF THE CHURCH AUGUSTINE THERE;

WHO DIED ON THE 29th DAY OF JULY, 1825.

BY JOHN BULLOCK, D.D.

PUBLISHED BY THE SOCIETY, OUT OF ITS

FUNDS FOR PUBLICATION.

THE

SUBSTANCE OF AN ORATION,

DELIVERED AT THE GRAVE

OF

The Rev. SAMUEL PEARCE.

WE are called together to-day upon a moſt ſolemn and affecting occaſion. Our buſineſs here is, to convey the precious remains of a dear departed brother to his long home, to the houſe appointed for all living. The ſubject of our preſent contemplation is of no ordinary kind; it is that which ought to come home to every man's boſom, becauſe it is that in which we are all intereſted. It is not like many other ſubjects, which, while ſome are materially affected by them, to others they are articles of total indifference: but death ſpeaks in an imperious tone, and demands the attention of all.

DEATH! ſolemn ſound! the bare annunciation of which, ſhould arreſt the mind of every individual in this numerous aſſembly. Where is the man that liveth and ſhall not ſee death? When Xerxes viewed his incalculable army, it is ſaid, he wept, from the conſideration that in a few years, not one of that prodigious hoſt would be living. Whether the Perſian really wept or not, I am not ſure; but when I conſider, that in a few, comparatively a very few years, not one of all whom I am now addreſſing but muſt be laid as low as the breathleſs corpſe of our dear departed brother, I feel my

my mind deeply affected. And, O that I could but awaken a due concern in every bosom about this truly momentous subject!

Thus stands the irrevocable decree of the immutable God—IT IS APPOINTED UNTO ALL MEN ONCE TO DIE. The wise and unwise, the patrician and plebeian, the monarch and the beggar, must submit alike to the strong arm of this universal conqueror, the king of terrors. A consideration like this, should sink deep into every man's heart; but alas! man is a strange being, loth to learn what most intimately belongs to him. The most awful things lose their effect by their frequency; and hence it is, that the death of a fellow-creature is, in general, no more regarded than "the fall of an autumnal leaf in the pathless desert." Wretched apathy! Fatal insensibility!

Let us for a moment meditate upon the effects subsequent to the triumph of the last enemy. What melancholy ravages does he make, even in this world! He causes the fairest flower to wither, often in the morning; he stains the pride of all sublunary glory; and casts the noblest work of God into the dust. When he takes to himself his great power, none can stay his hand. Fixed in his purpose, and irresistible in the execution of the same, he stalks, untouched by the pangs of agonizing nature; the distress of helpless infancy; the poignant grief of paternal affection; or the bitterest sorrows of connubial love. Relentlessly he breaks in upon domestic happiness; frustrates the most benevolent designs; and casts a dark shade upon the brightest prospects. In fine, cruelty marks his footsteps; and desolation and anguish are his common attendants.

If we look beyond the scene which presents itself to our view in this life; and, by the aid of revelation, endeavour

deavour to ſubſtantiate the ſerious realities of death, beyond "that bourne from whence no traveller returns!" if we look into the eternal world, and there behold what *follows* death, ſurely we cannot remain unmoved.

Man is immortal; it is the fleſh only that dies: The ſpirit is incorruptible. Hence death is the moſt eventful period. The body returns to duſt; but the ſpirit aſcends to God; and enters then upon its eternal ſtate. But the ſtate of all men is not alike beyond the grave—*The wicked is driven away in his wickedneſs.* The guilty ſinner then knows, that it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. Guilt ſubjects him to the divine diſpleaſure; and moral depravity unfits him for that place, into which nothing that defileth can poſſibly enter. Fearful moment! All his hopes are now like a ſpider's web; his imaginary refuges fail; and the wrath of God "beats upon his naked ſoul, in one eternal ſtorm." The rich man in LUKE xvi. can tell us all about it. He died, and was buried; and in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torment. And thus will it happen to all, who know not God. He that made them will have no mercy on them; whatever their reſpective ſituation may have been in this life. Death, that mighty leveller, will reduce them all to a ſad equality. He that fared ſumptuouſly every day, had not a drop of water to cool his burning tongue, when once he had paſſed the tremendous gulf.

How different the ſtate of a good man! *The righteous hath hope in his death.* The day of his death is infinitely better than the day of his birth: It is his coronation day; the final cloſe of all his troubles. He ſhall ſorrow no more. Whatever he underwent in paſſing through this vale of tears; however numerous and ſevere his trials, they are all over. The Lamb in the

the midſt of the throne ſhall feed him. He ſhall eat of the tree of life which is in the midſt of the paradiſe of God. He enters upon his reſt, and ſhall go no more out forever. He is happy, as God is happy; and ſerved with an everlaſting ſalvation.

Thus death is always a ſolemn, and affecting event: but ſometimes, circumſtances render it peculiarly ſo: and this is now the caſe. We have conveyed no common mortal to the grave. Here lies the cold, the exanimated clay of a good man; of an eminently good man; a faithful, highly favoured miniſter of the glorious Goſpel of the bleſſed God. When a good man dies, it is a common loſs; thus the Pſalmiſt viewed it. *Help, Lord, for the godly man ceaſeth!* The death of ſuch a man is a national loſs, for "the ſtrength of empire is religion." *Righteouſneſs exalteth a nation. Good men are the ſalt of the earth.* It is particularly a loſs to the cauſe of God on earth: there is one labourer leſs in the vineyard; one watchman leſs upon the walls of Jeruſalem. The death of that good man, whom we are now bewailing, is a great loſs to the churches of Chriſt. His ardent love for the *whole* truth; his flaming zeal; his chaſte converſation will be long remembered by many.

But you, my brethren, who compoſe the Church and Congregation in this place, you have had a great breach made upon you; a breach that cannot eaſily be repaired. You have loſt a valuable miniſter; a man, who laboured hard for your eternal good; a man, whoſe grand aim was to make you happy for ever. You know how frequently he has warned you to flee from the wrath to come; how plainly he has pointed you to the Lamb of God, as the only ſacrifice for your ſins. Yes, ye are witneſſes how he has prayed for you, and wept over you. You have often heard him raiſe, within theſe walls, his charming voice,

voice, in publishing glad tidings to Zion. This night twelve months, the place that I am now occupying, was occupied by him. This *very* night twelve months, you heard the Gospel in this *very* place from *his* mouth: But it is all over; you shall hear his voice, you shall see his face no more. There lies all that could die of a good man; a faithful minister; a tender father; and an affectionate husband. His lips are closed in silence; and a long night hangs upon his eyes. Dust is returning to dust; and corruption already commences its riot.

Painful as the stroke has been to you, there are those, on whom it has fallen with greater severity. You may be provided with another minister; but who can make up the loss to his bereaved family? Who can restore him to the deeply afflicted partner of his life? Who like him, can soothe her sorrows, and cheer her on the rugged path of time? Who can restore the fond father, to five dear helpless babes? Cruel death! Inexorable monster! What hast thou done?—But the Lord reigneth, and we will be still.

The present dispensation is not only solemn and affecting, but it is likewise alarming. It has a loud voice: not to attend to it, would be highly criminal. It speaks to us all. Death always speaks loudly; but some deaths louder than others. The present speaks loud enough to be heard BY THIS CHURCH AND CONGREGATION. Methinks, with strong emphasis, it now saith, UNTO YOU, O MEN OF THIS PLACE, I CALL. You have had a great loss; but is there not a cause? God forbid that I should charge the death of your minister upon you! Yet I know it is possible for a people to murder their minister; and that by the most cruel means. There needs neither the poison nor the dagger; it may be done effectually without either. I hope it is quite inapplicable; but it may

not be altogether uſeleſs, to aſk, Are there none of you, who have pierced him through with many ſorrows? Has his heart never been wrung by your unkindneſs? Has your miſbehaviour, in your Chriſtian profeſſion, never cauſed him to ſay, *O that I had in the wilderneſs, a lodging-place of wayfaring men, that I might leave my people and go from them.* JER. ix. 2. ? Though I thus ſpeak, I am ſure it has no general application. Few men were better beloved by their people than he was. Your many prayers for his recovery; your tender ſolicitude for his welfare; your preſent evident diſtreſs, all ſpeak for you: your tears do you honour. But let me ſpeak it again; ſhould there be a cruel individual amongſt you, to whom the charge applies, I would not for a world, be that man: He muſt anſwer for it another day. God will avenge his own elect.

Where this has not been the caſe; where nothing but kindneſs marked your behaviour towards your departed friend; has he had no occaſion to weep in ſecret on your account, becauſe though you eſteemed the man, you neglected his meſſage? Ah brethren! it is to be feared, unleſs your ſtate, as a church and congregation, be ſingular, that the word preached did not profit all of you. Some of you may yet be in your ſins. God has borne long with you; but he may have been weary of forbearing; he may have been angry at your infidelity; and in judgment taken away his ſervant. I do not ſay this is the caſe; but if it be only a *poſſible* caſe, it ſhould cauſe ſearchings of heart amongſt you.

It is a providence that ſpeaks to us all, as MORTAL MEN. In a little time, according to the common courſe of nature, the place that now knows us, ſhall know us no more. Time with rapid wing, bears us away to that place, where no device nor work is found;

found; to that ſtate, where there is no diſtinction, but that of juſt and unjuſt. But who can reckon upon the common extent of human life? Behold, before our eyes, a young man, who had not lived out half his days, called to eternity, in the thirty-fourth year of his life. Should not this awaken our concern, and excite us to make that important inquiry, WHO SHALL BE THE NEXT? He who bids the faireſt for length of years, may be the firſt to fall. Let us then ſo number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wiſdom.

We will now "turn to the bright reverſe of this mortifying ſcene." We have hitherto looked at the dark ſide of the cloud, let us now contemplate its luminous one.

Death we admit is a penalty—*by ſin came death.* Death is an enemy—*the laſt enemy;* but, bleſſed be God, he is a conquered enemy. The Captain of our ſalvation has deſtroyed him who had the power of death. Influenced by the faith of God's elect, believers in all ages have triumphed over death; they have ſang with their expiring breath, and exulted amidſt the ſwellings of Jordan.

Death is amongſt the privileges of the children of God. *Death is yours.* He meets them as a friend, as an envoy commiſſioned by their heavenly Father, to bring them to his throne. Our eyes have frequently beheld the victory of faith, in the dark valley. Aſſaulted on either hand by pale diſeaſe, and its long train of attendants, we have ſeen good men riſing ſuperior to all the evils of their ſituation; feeling a "majeſty in death;" and entering the eternal world, ſhouting, *Thanks be to God who hath given us the victory.*

This

This is not all. The total deſtruction of death is laid in the irreverſible counſel of the Moſt High. The laſt enemy ſhall be deſtroyed. Death himſelf muſt die. The tabernacle of God ſhall be with men; he will wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there ſhall be no more death. The ſea ſhall give up its dead, and thoſe that are in their graves ſhall come forth. Then the Lord Jeſus will make his triumph complete, and caſt death and hell into the lake of fire and brimſtone. The re-animated duſt of the redeemed ſhall then be perfectly releaſed from the bondage of corruption, and made like unto the glorious body of their great Head: the whole number of the elect ſhall then be preſented before the preſence of the divine glory, with exceeding great joy.

One grand indiſpenſable inquiry yet remains.—By what means may we attain to the reſurrection of the juſt? In ſearch of this important ſubject, we are not left to wander in the maze of uncertainty and doubt; the way into the holieſt is made manifeſt. There are three things abſolutely requiſite for a man to be acquainted with, before he can enter into life.

First, The pardon of our ſins. The ſcripture propoſes this unſpeakable gift by the blood of Jeſus. *We have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveneſs of our ſins.* Ephes. i. 7.

Secondly, The juſtification of our perſons. Proviſion for which is made by the obedience of the Son of God. *He is the end of the law for righteouſneſs to every one that believeth.* Rom. x. 4.

Thirdly, The ſanctification of our nature. *Jeſus is of God made unto us ſanctification.* 1. Cor. i. 30. By the influence of his Spirit upon our hearts, "we are made partakers of the divine nature; ſanctified in body,

body, ſoul and ſpirit; and changed thus into the divine image, as by the Spirit of our God." 2 Cor. iii. 8.

This is the only method of ſalvation countenanced in ſcripture; and it ſeems a method, "juſt to God, and ſafe to man."

To conclude. Though we ſorrow to-day, we do not ſorrow as thoſe who have no hope. God, who has taken away our dear brother, will take care of his. He will be a huſband to the forlorn widow, and a father to the dear tender babes. *A good man leaveth an inheritance to his children's children.* God will provide; he will ſurely do them good; he has the hearts of all men in his hands; he will raiſe up friends for them; and eventually make it appear, that even this dark diſpenſation, is amongſt the all things, that work together for good.

He that has the government upon his ſhoulders, will take care of you, my brethren, as a church. A paſtor is provided for you; and he who knows him, will bring him amongſt you in his own way, and time. Truſt in the Lord; he will never forſake Zion; her walls are ever before him. Take his word for your rule; live according to the ſame; ſeek him by prayer and ſupplication; and you ſhall yet praiſe him.

We now bid farewell, a *long* farewell, to the ſleeping duſt of our departed brother: but, bleſſed be God, though it be a long farewell, it will not be an everlaſting one. We ſhall meet again. What we are to-day ſowing in diſhonour, ſhall be raiſed in glory. The trumpet ſhall ſound; our brother will ariſe; we ſhall meet, no more to part. When Jeſus comes, he will bring all his ſaints with him. Comfort ye one another with theſe things.

A

SERMON

Occaſioned by the Death of

The Rev. SAMUEL PEARCE, A. M.

JOHN xiv. 18.

I WILL NOT LEAVE YOU COMFORTLESS. I WILL COME UNTO YOU.

SO deeply am I ſenſible of the loſs ſuſtained by this church in general, not to ſay by the neareſt relative of my dear departed brother, that on a partial view of their circumſtances, (and our views, eſpecially of afflictive events, are too commonly partial) I could not be ſurpriſed, were ſome now preſent ready to exclaim, "Is there any ſorrow like unto our ſorrow, wherewith the Lord has this day afflicted us?" But though I ſcarcely know where a church could ſuſtain an equal loſs, by the removal of ſo young a paſtor; nor can I conceive, there exiſts a widow, whom death has plundered of a richer ſtore of bleſſings, by taking from her and from her infant care, the guide of their youth; yet, on more mature conſideration, we muſt not admit that lamentation to be applicable, even to them that feel the moſt pungent grief in this aſſembly. The event which has occaſioned

ed our present meeting, must deeply affect even strangers, whose hearts know how to feel; but all the dearest friends of the deceased must acknowledge, that the days of tribulation, which preceded this mournful evening, were not the season of displaying the Lord's anger, but of the clear manifestation of his faithfulness and love: They were to him the days of heaven upon earth. Surely they who drank with him the deepest out of his cup of affliction, could find no savour of the curse, no, not at the bottom; nor could they drink the bitter, without tasting also of the sweet, which was not sparingly dropt into it, but copiously infused. And after such proofs and illustrations of the divine fidelity, I cannot but believe, that she who needs them most of all, shall find farther stores of consolation laid up for her relief: since God her Maker is her husband, who gveth songs in the night.

This church also must be reminded, that there was a church at Jerusalem, near eighteen centuries ago, which sustained a loss unspeakably greater than that which they now bewail; while yet the sorrow, which was *then* endured, was quickly turned into joy. And your affectionate pastor, who, both in health and in sickness, cared so much for your welfare, did not hesitate to recommend to your attention, the kind assurance which was given for *their* relief; as believing it to contain ground of encouragement, on which *you* also are authorized to depend. He who said to his dear disciples, "I will not leave *you* comfortless orphans, I will come unto *you*," has the same respect to his whole church in every age; and you, my brethren, may as safely rely on his gracious promise, as his very apostles.

Yes, beloved, we are authorized to make a general application of this word of consolation; and must affirm, That the promised presence of the blessed Redeemer

deemer is the best source of comfort, to all his people, in every time of trouble.

In complying with the request of my dear deceased brother, I shall first consider the subject in reference to those, to whom it was immediately addressed, and then endeavour to apply it to the present occasion.

First. Let us notice the immediate reference of this declaration, to our Lord's disciples, who were then favoured with his bodily presence.

You are well aware that the words I have read were spoken by the blessed Jesus, to those who followed him in the days of his humiliation; and that when he thus addressed them, sorrow had filled their hearts, because he had just announced his approaching departure. He came from the Father, and was come into the world, and though the world was made by him, yet the world knew him not; but he had made himself known to these his disciples, whom he had chosen out of the world; and now when he was about to leave them, and go unto the Father, though his stupid and ungrateful countrymen would rather rejoice at his leaving the earth, than bewail it, yet his disciples could not but weep and lament and be sorrowful; and surely, well they might, at the thought of losing such an invaluable Friend!

Especially we might expect this to be the case, if we reflect on the manner in which he was to be removed from them. They were to see him falsely accused, unjustly condemned, and cruelly murdered; being nailed to the cross with wicked hands, suspended between two thieves, and while thus numbered with transgressors, insulted and derided in his last agonies. Yes, he would be treated as the object of national abhorrence and execration, and that by the only people upon

upon earth, who professed to be the worshippers of the true God. And his disciples must either view this barbarous treatment of their blessed Lord, or hide themselves from the shocking scene, by forsaking him in the hour of distress. In the mean while, he was also apparently abandoned by God himself, the zeal of whose house had consumed him; the Lord was pleased to bruise him, and put him to grief; he was resolved to make his soul an offering for sin, and therefore he called on his sword to awake against him, who was their good Shepherd; though he was one in covenant, yea, one in nature with himself; who could without robbery claim equality with God. What could be more surprizing, distressing and perplexing to his disciples, than such a series of events!

While Jesus was with them he had fed them, and kept them as a shepherd doth his flock; he had laid them like lambs in his bosom, and led them on gradually in the paths of truth and righteousness, as they were able to bear it. He had been gentle among them, as a nursing father is gentle towards his little children; pitying their infirmities, rectifying their mistakes, supplying their wants, healing their maladies; manifesting to them his Father's will, and keeping them in his name: and must they now lose his visible presence, and see him no more?

He had been little more than *three and thirty* years in the world, and most of them had known him but a very small part of that period; they had, however, now beheld his glory, and were convinced that it was the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. They were satisfied that he alone had the words of eternal life; they believed and knew that he was the Christ, the Son of the living God; though at present they understood but imperfectly that plan of redemption, which rendered it expedient and necessary,

ceſſary, that he ſhould ſuffer all theſe things and then enter into glory. This remaining ignorance muſt abundantly enhance their grief, at the intimations given them of his departure being at hand.*

But in theſe words, their gracious Lord ſuggeſts, that *they* had no occaſion to ſink under their ſorrows. He would *not leave* them *comfortleſs*, like deſtitute *orphans*, who had no affectionate parent, no wiſe tutor, no faithful guardian, to ſupply their wants, ſympathize with them, protect them from evil, or inſtruct them in the way of duty. No, he had promiſed them his Holy Spirit, to be their Comforter and Monitor; and here he engages alſo, to come again to them himſelf; *I will come unto you*, ſaith our Lord. This promiſe was fulfilled to them in ſeveral ways—

1. In his *repeated appearances* to them, after his reſurrection. Thus, as he ſuggeſts in the next verſe, although in a little while, the world ſhould ſee him no more, yet they ſhould ſee him; and that ſight ſhould be the pledge that his words ſhould hold good, "Becauſe I live, ye ſhall live alſo." Accordingly the Evangeliſts

* The conceptions of the diſciples, on the ſubject of Chriſt's atoning ſacrifice, appear to have been much leſs diſtinct than thoſe of David, Iaiah, and many of the Old Teſtament ſaints, who lived before the declenſion of the Jewiſh church; which appears to have loſt much of its ſpiritual light, and to have become more and more carnalized, from the days of Malachi, till the coming of our Lord. And as it ſeemed neceſſary that this general declenſion, and ignorance of the nature of the Meſſiah's character and kingdom ſhould be ſuffered to take place, in order to the fulfilment of prophecy, in the death of our aviour, by the hands of his own countrymen; ſo there was an expediency, and a diſplay of wiſdom in concealing from the diſciples the neceſſity and glorious deſign of Chriſt's Death, that they might not rejoice in ſo awful an event, till after it was over: had their ideas been clear on this head, they muſt have rejoiced in his ſufferings at the very time of them; but it ſeemed more fitting that they ſhould mourn then, and that their ſorrow ſhould be turned into joy, after his reſurrection.

Evangelists attest, that he "shewed himself alive after his passion, by many infallible proofs, unto the Apostles whom he had chosen, being seen of them forty days," before he was taken up into glory: for God who raised him up, the third day after his crucifixion, "shewed him openly, not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, even to us," says Peter, "who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead; whom he commanded to preach unto the people, and to testify that he is appointed to be the Judge of the living and the dead; and that to him all the prophets gave witness, that through his name, whosoever believeth in him, shall receive remission of sins." Therefore, though he soon left them again, being carried up into heaven, yet their understandings having been opened by him, that they might understand the scriptures, and see how it behoved him to suffer, and to rise again, "they worshipped him, when he was parted from them, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy," where they waited to be endued with power from on high, and received the promised effusion of the Spirit, not many days afterward. But,

2. It received a more permanent accomplishment, in the continued enjoyment of his spiritual Presence and divine Influence. We fully ascertain this privilege to be included in the text, by comparing this promise, *I will come unto you*, with those declarations, recorded by Matthew, which admit of no solution without the acknowledgment of Christ's proper divinity: "*Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I, in the midst of them. And, lo! I am with you always to the end of the world. Amen.*"

3. At the end of the world, it shall receive a farther fulfilment, by our Lord's coming again in that human nature, which "*it behoved heaven to receive*, until the

the times of the reſtitution of all the things of which God ſpake by the mouth of his holy prophets, ſince the world began." Then he who went to prepare a place for his diſciples, and all his ſubſequent followers, will come again, and receive them to himſelf; that where he is, there they may be alſo. Then they who were troubled for their adherence to his cauſe, ſhall enter into reſt; when the Lord Jeſus ſhall be revealed from heaven. At that ſame period, will he take vengeance on them who know not God, and who obey not the goſpel of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and puniſh them with everlaſting deſtruction; when he ſhall come to be glorified in his ſaints, and admired in all them who believe. For God will bring with him them who now ſleep in Jeſus, while the believers who remain, at that time, alive upon earth, ſhall feel a change paſs upon their bodies, to render them like thoſe who are newly raiſed from the dead, and all "ſhall be caught up together to meet the Lord in the air, and ſo ſhall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore," ſays Paul, "comfort one another with theſe words." He who teſtified theſe things to his diſciples, while he was yet with them, repeated his promiſe long afterwards, to his ſervant John, ſaying, "Surely, I come quickly." May we unite with that beloved diſciple, in ſaying, "Amen. Even ſo come, Lord Jeſus."

And now, my brethren, if this aſſurance was ſufficient to relieve the minds of the Apoſtles, when they loſt the bodily preſence of their Divine Maſter, may we not ſafely proceed

Secondly, To apply the ſame conſolation to the relief of thoſe who are moſt affected by the late bereaving providence.

This Church has loſt a moſt diligent, faithful, affectionate and valuable Paſtor; and far be it from me to

make light of your loss. All those churches who knew him only by occasional visits, all good men who had any opportunity of appreciating his worth, must sympathize with you; while they grieve to think that they themselves, who saw his face so seldom, shall see it no more. His brethren in the ministry, who enjoyed the pleasure and advantage of his friendship and correspondence, feel a loss which they will ever deplore. How then must you regret his removal, who were, many of you, the seals of his ministry; who, all of you, hoped long to enjoy his constant labours; and for whose welfare he laid himself out, with such unremitting assiduity? The Pastor whose absence you mourn, possessed such an assemblage of lovely graces and acceptable qualifications, as are found united but seldom, even in truly Christian ministers. He had the firmest attachment to evangelical truth, and the most constant regard to practical godliness; he united remarkable soundness of judgment, with uncommon warmth of affections. I never saw, at least in one of his years, such active, ardent zeal, conjoined with such gentleness, modesty and deep humility; so much of the little child, and so much of the Evangelist, I can scarcely forbear saying, of the Apostle of Jesus Christ. I know not how to flatter you, with the hope of obtaining another minister; or myself, with the expectation of finding another friend, in whom *all* these charming qualities shall be found, in an *equal* degree. He was, indeed, "a burning and a shining light, and we rejoiced in his light, for a season;" but now we must lament, that he shines no more on earth; though we doubt not, that he shines like the sun, in the kingdom of his Father.

While he abode among us, his affections were evidently and eminently in heaven; his work, his family, and his people, were the only objects of regard, which made him willing to forego the bliss of the eternal

nal world. And when he perceived that it was the Lord's will he should depart, your welfare was still his chief concern. For your consolation and benefit, he wished this passage to be considered at his funeral. He once alluded to another scripture, but laying that aside, lest it should occasion too much being said of himself, he fixed upon this; remarking, "If *he* comes to you, all will be well, you need not regret *my* removal." So you see, brethren, the design of your dear Pastor was to encourage you to claim a share in the promised presence of the Redeemer; which he knew extended to all his churches, and to every individual believer. He perceived that he was going to leave you, *he* could not promise to come again to you, though it was his great consolation to hope that you, in succession, will follow him; and meanwhile, the presence of his great Master, as to his divine nature, and the increasing influence of his Spirit, would be a sufficient compensation for any loss you could sustain by his departure. The spiritual presence of Christ could make up for the want of his bodily presence, to those who knew what it was to enjoy the latter; it must then assuredly be sufficient to supply the absence of any under-shepherd. With this thought my dear brother consoled himself, in the beginning of his illness; "If," said he, in a letter written the first Lord's day that he was confined from public worship, "if I am to depart hence, to be no more seen, I know the Lord can carry on his cause as well without me as with me; he who redeemed the sheep with his blood, will never suffer them to perish for want of shepherding, especially, since He himself is the chief Shepherd of souls."

Let me therefore attempt to assist you by directing your attention to the grounds on which you may safely expect the fulfilment of the promise, the magnitude of the promise itself, and the consequent obligations under which you are laid by it.

1. Consider

1. Consider the *ground* on which you may safely build an *expectation* that our Lord Jesus will come unto you.

Our Lord's ability to make good such a promise, must here be noticed. Not only had he an inherent power to lay down his life, and to take it up again, in consequence of which he spent forty days with his disciples, before his ascension; but he has power to perform his standing engagements with his whole church, of being *with them, alway, to the end of the world*, whenever, and wherever, *two or three are gathered together in his name*; which promises must be connected with the text to enable you to claim any part in the consolation it will administer. Some modern enthusiasts, (who can believe any thing which does not imply that they are so *guilty* as to need the incarnate Son of God to make an atonement for their sins, by his precious blood) have fancied that the body of Jesus, who, according to them, was a mere man like ourselves, ascended no higher than the atmosphere, which surrounds the earth, and that he occasionally descends from thence to this globe, to visit invisibly and one at a time, the various congregations of Christians. This idea, it has been said, "cannot possibly do us any harm;" but, alas! it can do us but little good. If the Saviour should thus visit all those who are called by his name, our turn to be so favoured may occur but once in a life-time; or whether they who have invented this solution of Matt. xviii. 20, would admit us, whom they represent as irrational idolaters, to enjoy any share in his visits, I know not. Nor would it be of consequence, whether it were granted or denied; a mere man surveying us invisibly, now and then, could impart to us no spiritual blessing. But, if our great High-Priest be, indeed, in the most exalted sense, the Son of God, who is "*passed through*"* these

* διεληλυθοτα τους ουρανους. Heb. iv. 14. vii. 26. Eph. iv. 9, 10.

theſe lower heavens, and is "*made higher* than the heavens," having "aſcended up *far above* all heavens, that he might *fill all things*," (according to the paſſage which we heard explained this morning*) and, if "*all power* be given unto him, in heaven and in earth," *then*, my brethren, your faith ſtands upon a firm foundation. He who, when he was upon earth, as to his humanity, could ſpeak of himſelf as being "in heaven;" can as eaſily grant you the preſence of his Divinity, now his human nature is in the world above.

Let the extent of his regard to his church, be alſo remembered. In his laſt prayer with his diſciples, he prayed not alone for them who were preſent, but for all who ſhould believe through their word. And "he ever liveth, to make interceſſion for † all them, who come unto God by him." In every age hath his church been the object of his gracious regard: and he

* By brother Weſt, of Wantage.

† ἐντυγχανειν ὑπερ αὐτων. Heb viii. 25. Mr Belſham, a profeſſed advocate of rational religion, ſuppoſes that *the writers* of the New-Teſtament *themſelves, annexed no very diſtinct idea to the phraſe* of Chriſt's making interceſſion, becauſe ἐντυγχανειν, he obſerves, expreſſes any interference of one perſon *for* or *againſt* another. It is true, that in the Epiſtle to the Romans, Paul mentions Chriſt's *making interceſſion* FOR us, viii. 34; and Elijah's *making interceſſion* AGAINST *Iſrael*, xi. 2. And he uſes this ſame verb, but with different prepoſitions, in both places. But can any ambiguity ariſe from employing one word, with prepoſitions of oppoſite import, to denote oppoſite things? Will not the things thus oppoſed rather illuſtrate each other? Ἐντυγχανειν ΥΠΕΡ, is to plead *for*, and Ἐντυγχανειν ΚΑΤΑ, to plead *againſt*: the latter phraſe is repeatedly uſed in the Maccabees, to expreſs the act of *complaining againſt, bringing an accuſation againſt, making complaint againſt* a perſon or perſons. 1 Mac. viii. 32. x. 61, 63. xi. 25. And as this is the part of a proſecutor or accuſer, ſo the former is the part of an advocate, patron, or interceſſor. The Jews have adopted the two Greek terms Παρακλητος an *advocate*, uſed 1 John, ii 1. and Κατηγορος, an *accuſer*, uſed Rev. xii. 10. and employ both in the Chaldee paraphraſe of Job xxxiii. 23. "an Angel is prepared, one *advocate* (פרקליטא) among a thouſand *accuſers* (קטיגלרוא)." See Outram de Sacrificiis. Lib. II. Cap. VII.

he has fulfilled the promise which he made in the days of Zechariah, "Lo, I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith Jehovah. And many nations shall be joined unto Jehovah, in that day, and shall be my people; and I will dwell in the midst of thee, and thou shalt know that Jehovah God of Hosts hath sent me unto thee."—To the primitive church under all the pagan persecutions, was this promise fulfilled; to the Waldenses and Albigenses in the darkest times of Popery; to the first reformers from Antichristian error, and to their faithful successors; whether conformists or non-conformists; in this Island, on the continent of Europe, or in the wilds of North-America. And at this day, wherever two or three assemble in his name, at Birmingham or at Bristol, in London or at Edinburgh, in Old Holland or in New Holland, at Mudnabatty, or at Otaheite, at the Cape of Good Hope or in Kentucky, there may our distant brethren, as well as ourselves, expect our glorious Lord to fulfil his word, *I will come unto you.*

The *express promises* he has made, of which the text is one, and we have recited several others, forbid us to doubt of the bestowment of this invaluable blessing. Jesus is the "faithful and true Witness; the same yesterday, to-day and for ever. In him all the promises of God are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us."—He assured his servant Paul, in a season of peculiar difficulty, "*My* grace is sufficient for thee;" and the grace which could suffice for him, who accounted himself the chief of sinners, and less than the least of saints, is sufficient for us also. His strength is displayed to the greatest advantage in our weakness. O remember how it was lately displayed in the weakness, the extreme weakness, of your dear dying Pastor, on whom the power of Christ so visibly rested. When his heart and flesh were failing, how did he rejoice in God his Saviour, as the strength

of

of his heart, and his portion for ever! And is there a mourner present, so feeble, so disconsolate, so bereaved of every created source of bliss, as that this grace will not suffice for her support? Or will he, who kept his word with such "punctilious veracity" to the Husband, forget his promise to the Widow and the Fatherless? Assuredly he will not.

Remember, my brethren, the *readiness of the Redeemer to hear and answer prayer.*—Though Paul besought him thrice upon one subject, before he received an immediate reply, the promise was fulfilled even before it was pronounced; he, like one who lived long before him, and like myriads who have since made trial of the same resource, was "strengthened with strength in his soul," before the Saviour expressly declared, "My strength is made perfect in weakness." Continue therefore instant in prayer. Remember the apparent rebuffs encountered at first by the woman of Canaan, and how amply her faith was answered at last. Did not Jesus inculcate this maxim, "that men ought always to pray, and not to faint;" and spake a parable to illustrate and enforce that duty? Rich blessings, I trust, are still in reserve for you, in answer to the many fervent petitions, which your dear Pastor offered up on your behalf, from the time of his first acquaintance with this Church, and during better than nine years,* wherein he has more fully undertaken the oversight of you in the Lord. May you yourselves pray without ceasing, and plead with the Lord his own exceeding great and precious promises, which will be found to contain blessings fully proportioned to all your necessities.

It was doubtless in consequence of many comfortable *evidences*, that *God has a number of spiritual worshippers* among you, that my dear brother was encouraged

* He was ordained August, 1790.

aged to expect this declaration would be certainly fulfilled in your present circumstances. But though I gladly indulge a similar confidence, yet neither I, whose personal knowledge of you is very confined, nor he, whose acquaintance was much more intimate and general, could answer for every professor among you. From what has taken place in all the large congregations I have known, I am afraid lest the hopes of your Pastor may be disappointed, as to some individuals, whom he never suspected, but whose future apostasy will indicate the superficial nature of their present profession, and ensure them a final portion with hypocrites and unbelievers. Greatly shall I rejoice, if not *one* such character should ever be found among you; but to render the consolation in the text more certain in its personal application, I must exhort you to examine and prove your own selves, and to give all diligence to make your calling and election sure. Unless you are such of whom God disapproves, Christ is in you, the hope of glory; he dwells in your hearts by faith, and you begin to be conformed to his lovely image. You account mental nearness to God the chief good. You value communion with him above all the world. Is not this the case, my brethren? I trust you can say with the Psalmist, Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee. Fear not, that the Lord will frustrate the desires his own Spirit has excited, or abandon that soul, whose wishes centre wholly in himself.

In the mean while, to increase the intenseness of your desires after the presence of Christ, let us proceed to consider

2. *The magnitude of the promise.*

Has Christ said, "I will come unto you?" and have you been told to-night that his presence can make

up

up every loſs? Well may you credit the aſſertion, if you conſider what is intended by the promiſe in the text.

It imports that *he will manifeſt to you his glory.* And O how delightful the ſight! "Lord!" ſaid Jude, "how is it that thou wilt manifeſt thyſelf unto us, and not unto the world?" This exclamation might denote partial ignorance, as well as grateful ſurpriſe: but the ſecret was in great meaſure explained, when the Spirit was poured out from on high. Then Paul obſerved, "God, who commanded the light to ſhine out of darkneſs, hath ſhined into our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jeſus Chriſt:" ſo that while others have "their underſtandings darkened, being alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance which is in them, becauſe of the blindneſs (or rather the *calloſuneſs*,*) of their hearts; we all, with open face, beholding, as in a *mirror*, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the ſame image, from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord."

If the Lord grant you his ſpecial preſence, you will not only realize his eſſential and mediatorial glory, but be cheered alſo with a *lively ſenſe of his love.* And what conſolation can equal that which muſt reſult from ſuch a ſource? "To know the love of Chriſt, which paſſeth knowledge," is a bleſſing which the Apoſtle conſidered as immediately connected with being "filled with all the fulneſs of God;" and the beſtowment of which was a proof that he is "able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we aſk or thing." Unleſs we could conceive the full *extent* of the happineſs produced by the redemption of Chriſt throughout the whole

* διὰ τὴν πώρωσιν τῆς καρδίας αὐτῶν. Eph iv. 18. Πώρωσις, concretio quæ in callum fit. In ſacris literis πώρωσις καρδίας quum cor obcallu.t. *Scapula. Robertſon.*

whole empire of God; unless we could comprehend the *length* of eternity, in which the felicity of the saved shall be forever increasing, as fast as God shall increase their capacity of enjoyment; unless we could measure the lowest *depths* of hell, from whence our Saviour has ransomed us, with the invaluable price of his blood; and the *height* of glory, to which we shall be raised as the reward of Immanuel's obedience; it will be impossible fully to conceive the greatness of his love. However, enough may be known to convince us that his favour is better than life, and to fill us, even in the present state, amidst all our outward trials, and even our inward conflicts, with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

Reflect, that if Christ should come unto you, according to this gracious promise, *he will communicate unto you*, more largely, *the supply of his Spirit*. And shall not this fit you for every duty, support you under every pressure, and ensure you the victory over every spiritual enemy? Yes, my beloved, if you enjoy much of the presence of Jesus, it will make you active for God, and excite you to every good work. You will not be slothful in business, but fervent in spirit, serving the Lord. You will aim at the divine glory in every thing, even in all your civil employments. You will gladly consecrate the gain of your merchandize to the Lord, and honour him with your substance. It will rejoice your soul to think that you are "not your own," but "bought with a price," and you will feel yourselves bound to "glorify God, with your bodies, and with your spirits, which are God's:" nor can you forbear to admit his claim to all which you possess; for "the silver is mine and the gold is mine," saith the Lord of Hosts, and your thankful hearts must say, Amen. You will wish to inscribe on all your property, and on all your utensils that blessed motto, *Holiness to the Lord*. The presence of Christ will inspire you with ardour, resolution

resolution and zeal, to promote his kingdom among men. You will not let your *Lord's-day Schools* decline; nor will your contribution to the MISSION, in which you stood foremost so early, now be suffered to fall off, because that dear man is gone to glory, who first excited your attention to these good works; but you will remember that Christ himself is with you, who walks among his golden candlesticks, to notice how their light shineth before men, to the honour of their heavenly Father.—If you should meet with farther trials, the presence of Jesus will suffice to support you under the cross, as it did the Apostles, and primitive Christians. O brethren! I pray you may live as seeing Him who is invisible. Remember that Christ, when upon earth, could not do more for his first disciples, than he can now perform for you, by his divine presence. Ah! . . . . . if he were here, in his glorified body, . . or even in the lowly form in which he appeared in the days of his humiliation, ... if he often called upon you, ... or you could, at any time, resort to him . . . or if he lodged at your house, ... or came thither as often as he visited the house of Lazarus, at Bethany; . . . . . would you not then consult him in every thing; and always follow his good advice? and fear no consequences, when you complied with his directions? And do you believe the Divinity of Christ, and act otherwise now? O shameful inconsistency! Look unto Jesus. *Look off*, my brethren, from all other objects; from all false confidences, from all discouragements, from all the foaming billows, which threaten to swallow you up, *unto Jesus*. He is above, looking down upon you. He is at hand, ready to assist you. See, how he stretches forth his arm to support you, and keep you from sinking in the deep waters. Separate from him, you can do nothing; but the weakest can do all things, can bear all burdens, can conquer all the hosts of hell, through Christ strengthening him.

If

If you are thus authorized to expect the presence of Christ, will he not *take you under the care of his providence.* How sweet is the idea of an omnipresent God! Not a local Deity, as the gods of the heathen were supposed to be, even by their own worshippers. But a God *afar off*, as well as *at hand.* Present with his captive servants, to check the violence of the fire, and stop the mouths of lions, in favour of his exiles in Babylon, as surely as ever he had been ready to hear prayer in his temple at Jerusalem. A God in India, as well as in England. Who shewed himself to be present with his servant *Pearce* in Birmingham, to make all his bed in his sickness: and was at the same time present, though we knew not where, with his servant *Ward* and his companions; whether they are still traversing the mighty ocean, or whether the *Criterion* has reached its desired haven. Perhaps, they have already met with *Carey*, and *Thomas*, and *Fountain*, and Jesus is in the midst of them, while they are praying for us in Bengal. Yes, Asia was long ago reminded, that "the eyes of JeHoVaH run to and fro throughout the whole earth, that he may shew himself strong in the behalf of them whose hearts are perfect towards him." And how comfortable is it to reflect, that this attribute of Deity, and every other, belongs to God the Son, as well as to God the Father. The husband of the church is the God of the whole earth. Jesus has all power on earth as well as in heaven. They, therefore, who "seek first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness," shall find "all things added unto them." "My God," (said Paul to the Philippians) "shall supply all your need, according to his riches in glory, by Christ Jesus." Cast on him, therefore, all your care: he careth for all his churches; and though you know not which way to look, he can find another pastor for this church, to repair the breach that death has made. He can raise up friends for the widow and the children of his departed servant; yea, he himself

himſelf will be their guardian and defence. A father to the fatherleſs, and the patron of the widow, is God in his holy habitation; he will never fail them, nor forſake them.

FINALLY, The preſence of Chriſt, with his people on earth, ſhall *prepare* them *for the uninterrupted enjoyment of his preſence in the celeſtial world.* He himſelf will be with you walking in the way, and the fooliſh ſhall not err therein. He will guide you by his counſel, and afterwards receive you into glory. One of you after another ſhall follow your dear Paſtor, perhaps before the end of this year, and four or five next year, and ſo on, till you all meet again in that heavenly city, where the *Lord God* Almighty and the *Lamb*, are the temple of it; the glory of *God* doth enlighten it, and the *Lamb* is the light thereof; and the inhabitants drink of the pure river of the water of life, proceeding out of the throne of *God* and the *Lamb*; and there ſhall be no more curſe, but the throne of *God* and of the *Lamb* ſhall be in it: and his ſervants ſhall ſerve him, and they ſhall ſee his face, and his name ſhall be in their foreheads; for they ſhall be completely like him, when they ſhall ſee him as he is. But let me once more beſeech you to notice

3. The *conſequent obligations*, under which you are laid.

Your Lord has ſaid, "I will come unto you." *Believe him.* Take him at his word. Plead it before his throne of grace. Prove that you value his preſence above every thing. Live under an abiding conviction, that without it, you muſt be comfortleſs, notwithſtanding the preſence of every temporal enjoyment; but with it, you muſt be happy, even under the preſſure of every earthly calamity.

Let then the *expectation* that this promise will be accomplished, *moderate your sorrows*, on the present occasion, and on all others, and direct them into a proper channel. It is the presence of Christ which constitutes the perfected felicity of our dear departed friend: But Christ is really present with his church upon earth also: pray for more faith to realize that truth, and your heaven shall be begun below. He has said, "If any one love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." And what is the loss, which the enjoyment of the presence of Christ, and of his Father, cannot compensate? or, what is the affliction, under which fellowship with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ, will not console you?

Let this promise enhance your *gratitude* for past mercies, and your *solicitude* to improve those which remain. It was from him, who ascended on high, after descending into the lowest parts of the earth, and who received gifts for men,* that our dear brother received all his ministerial qualifications, as well as every Christian grace: and it was his blessing alone, which rendered him so successful, in winning souls to Christ. With him is the residue of the Spirit. He has yet blessings in store to communicate. O live on his fulness! Though your beloved Pastor is gone, I trust that the benefit, which many of you received from his ministry, will never be lost. Ministers die, but Jesus lives; and his word endureth forever. You have also a prospect of still enjoying his ordinances. Look up for his gracious influence to attend them, knowing that neither is he who planteth any thing, nor he who watereth; but it is God who giveth the increase.

May

* See an excellent Sermon of brother Pearce's on Ephes. iv. 11. *On the duty of Churches to regard Ministers as the gift of Christ*, at Mr Belsher's Ordination, 1796.

May the promise of Christ's presence excite your concern to *prepare for his coming*. Let it excite your watchfulness against every thing, which would be offensive to your blessed Lord. Christians, Is there any thing in the daily course of your behaviour, or in the management of your families, of which you would be ashamed, if Christ were now upon earth in human nature, and took up his abode with you? And can you truly believe his Divinity, and not be afraid that he, whose eyes are as a flame of fire, should see such transactions? Do you not believe that he even searches the reins and the hearts? and has he not said, that all the churches shall know it? Behold, he cometh frequently, as unexpected as a thief: Blessed is he who watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.

BUT now, without confining myself farther to the immediate language of the text, give me leave to address a few words, by way of a more *general improvement* of the late afflictive providence, both to the members of the Church statedly assembling in this place of worship, and the Congregation and Strangers present.

I address myself first to the CHURCH. You, my brethren, have, within these ten days, sustained the loss of a very affectionate and faithful Pastor; a young and active, and at the same time an able and judicious minister; who had approved himself among you for nine or ten years, and whose labours you hoped to enjoy for many years to come. But he is taken away in the midst of his usefulness, having but just completed the *thirty-third* year of his age. In such a trial, you have room to mourn. JESUS wept. And devout men made great lamentation at the death of *Stephen*.

Yet

Yet forget not to be thankful, that ever the Lord raised up such a minister, and gave you the chief benefit of his labours. It was the kindness of Providence that fixed him in this place, and continued him with you for several years. You have reason to bless God also, that he did not run in vain, nor labour in vain. Bless the Lord for giving so many seals to his ministry, and for enabling him to live so honourably, and to die so triumphantly.

And now, let each individual examine himself, how far he profited by the ministrations of this dear servant of Jesus Christ. If any of you put him out of his place, and idolized him; let such learn wisdom in future, and so account of us, as only the stewards of the mysteries of God. If any undervalued him, let them sincerely repent of that evil. And let all be concerned, that the benefit of his ministry may not die with him. Remember the interesting and important truths you professed to receive from him. Remember the affectionate and earnest exhortations, addressed to you by him, from this pulpit. Remember the consistent and lovely example which he set before you; and the evidence of the truth of religion, and the display of the faithfulness of God, which was made by his supports, under his painful and protracted affliction.

Consider, beloved, your *duty to his Family*, and shew the sincerity of your regard for your late dear Pastor, by your tender sympathy with his distressed Widow, and the substantial tokens of your affection to his *five* fatherless Children, whose tender years prevent them from forming any adequate conception of their unspeakable loss. May all the friends of the deceased, bear them and their afflicted mother on their hearts before the Lord; remembering how essential a part of pure and undefiled religion it is, to

pay

pay kind attention to the orphan and the widow in their affliction; and accounting it an honour to imitate and ſubſerve that glorious Being, in whom the fatherleſs findeth mercy, and who encourages the deſolate widow to put her truſt in him.

My dear brethren, forget not your *duty to one another* alſo, in this ſeaſon of trial. While thus deprived of a paſtor, to take the overſight of you in the Lord, watch over each other the more carefully in love. Forſake not the aſſembling of yourſelves together, but ſtand faſt in the Lord. Strengthen the hands of your *deacons*, at a time when the concerns of the church lie the heavier upon them, inſtead of indulging, as ſometimes the caſe has been in other churches, a ſpirit of groundleſs jealouſy, reſpecting thoſe whom you yourſelves have called to that office, and who have ſhewn a conſcientious and upright regard for your welfare.

In looking out for a miniſter, I truſt, you will be careful to ſeek one of the ſame ſtamp with my late dear brother; one, who will guide you in the true narrow way, and guard you from error on the right hand and on the left; who will warn you againſt every ſentiment which would diſhonour God's moral *government*, as well as faithfully oppoſe whatever notion would diſparage the riches of his glorious *grace*. May you chooſe a man equally zealous againſt ſelf-righteouſneſs, and againſt ſelf-indulgence; who will preach ſalvation by Chriſt alone, and inſiſt on deliverance from the power and love of ſin, as a moſt eſſential part of that ſalvation. May God direct you to a miniſter, who ſhall anſwer to the deſcription given by Paul of himſelf and his fellow labourers, "We preach Chriſt in you the hope of glory, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wiſdom; that we may preſent every man perfect in Chriſt Jeſus." May he be able to appeal to you, on his death bed, in the

words of the same Apostle, "As we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, so we spake, not as pleasing men, but God, who trieth our hearts: not using flattering words, as ye know, nor a cloak of covetousness, God is witness; nor seeking glory of men; but we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children; so, being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us. Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily, and justly, and how unblameably we behaved ourselves among you who believe: as ye know, how he exhorted, and comforted, and charged every one of you, as a father his children, that ye should walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory." Such a protestation, I am confident, your late beloved Pastor might have safely made, and I pray God, his successor may be assisted to imitate the same primitive example, and find a corresponding testimony in the conscience of every unprejudiced hearer.

At the same time, let me exhort you, my brethren, to manifest *genuine Christian candour* in your choice of another minister, and in all your subsequent conduct towards him. If he should not equal his predecessor in the popularity of his talents, the readiness of his utterance, or in every amiable qualification of still higher importance, yet if his heart be evidently devoted to God, do not despise him, nor undervalue him; but pray for him, encourage him, strengthen his hands in God. Make him not an offender for a word, nor for the want of a word. And do not magnify such infirmities as are common to the best of men in this state of imperfection.

Endeavour, brethren, *to be unanimous* in your choice. Let none oppose the general vote, merely to shew their

their conſequence, or aſſert their liberty. Nor let others reſolve upon having their own way, becauſe they have a ſmall majority of their mind: but endeavour to accommodate one another, as far as it is poſſible, without ſacrificing truth or prudence. Only be ſure that you ſeek a paſtor that is a holy man of God, a faithful ſervant of Jeſus Chriſt, who will naturally care for your ſouls.

Finally, beloved, let all be careful to walk worthy of the Lord, in the practice of all that is well-pleaſing in his ſight. And let it appear that God, by taking your late dear miniſter to heaven, has drawn you nearer to heaven. Remember that Chriſt is now in the midſt of you, and that you hope ſoon to be with him in his kingdom, and to live and reign with him for ever. What manner of perſons ought you then to be, in all holy converſation and godlineſs!

WHAT I have ſaid to the members of the *church*, will, for the moſt part, apply to ſuch of the *ſtated* CONGREGATION, as are partakers of the grace of God.

But there are ſome, who conſtantly attended my dear brother's miniſtry, who are left unconverted. O what ſhall I ſay to them! I earneſtly pray, that they who heard him in vain while alive, may hear him now he is dead, ſo as to be made alive themſelves. For, being dead, he yet ſpeaketh. The hiſtory which all his friends can give you, of his life, and of his death, (his bleſſed death!) proclaims to you, the truth and excellence of the goſpel. Do not you alſo remember that ſhort, but moſt affecting addreſs, which he made to you, the laſt time he aſcended this pulpit, after brother Franklin of Coventry had been preaching?

ing? Then he told some, that his highest comfort, amidst the symptoms of approaching dissolution, which he then exhibited, was the expectation of meeting them in heaven; while he forewarned others of you, that his greatest anxiety arose from his fear of being obliged to witness against you, as despisers and rejecters of the glorious Redeemer. O that the recollection of that dying warning, enforced by all his own happy experience in succeeding months of suffering and superabounding consolation, might convince you of the vast importance of true religion, of the unspeakable worth of the gospel of Christ, and of the blessedness of being interested in his great salvation, and obtaining an inheritance among them who are sanctified, through faith in him.

Many may expect, especially those who are *strangers*, to hear a *character of the deceased*; but he chose this text to avoid much being said of himself, and though I should not scruple introducing whatever might tend to honour divine grace, and to promote your edification, yet I am unable to enter into a particular biographical detail at this time. And as to his character, *those*, who knew him well, need not my delineation of it, to make them remember it with high esteem, to their dying day; while others might suspect me of flattery, if I said but the half of what I cordially believe. One thing I will say, which I could say of very few others, though I have known many of the excellent of the earth, That I never saw, or heard of any thing respecting him, which grieved me, unless it was his inattention to his health, and that I believe was owing to a mistaken idea of his constitution. If any of you know of other faults belonging to him, be careful to shun them; but O be sure to follow him, wherein he was a follower of Christ.

While

While his outward conduct was remarkably blameleſs and exemplary, he evidently had a deep, abiding, humbling ſenſe of the evil of ſin, of his own native depravity, and remaining ſinfulneſs; of his abſolute need of Chriſt as an atoning ſacrifice, and the Lord his righteouſneſs; and of the love of the Spirit, and the importance of his work as a ſanctifier.—He lived a life of faith on the incarnate Son of God, as the bleſſed Mediator, who had loved him and given himſelf for him; and as Chriſt was all in all to him, his joy and his gain, in life and in death, ſo he took great delight in preaching Chriſt to others, as the only and all-ſufficient Saviour; he earneſtly longed, had it been permitted him by Providence, to have preached Chriſt to the heathen, and would have been glad to have carried the tidings of ſalvation by his blood, to the ends of the earth.

But, inſtead of giving a fuller account in my own words, I will give all ſtrangers the means of forming a juſt idea of the man, and of the nature of his religion, by reading ſome of his letters, written three of them to myſelf, and two to the officers of this church, at different periods of his long illneſs; to which I ſhall add a few detached ſentences, uttered nearer the cloſe of his life, and taken down by his neareſt relative.

Theſe will tend more to your edification who know the Redeemer, and more to the conviction of thoſe who know him not, than any ſtudied panegyric.

May they excite all preſent to pray from the heart, Let me live the *life*, as well as die the *death*, of the righteous; may the *commencement* of my profeſſion, and may my *latter end* be like his. Amen and Amen.

THE

THE FOLLOWING

LETTERS and NARRATIVE

Were read before the concluding paragraph of the Sermon.

To Dr. RYLAND.

Birmingham, Dec. 9, 1798.
Lord's-Day Evening.

My dear Brother,

AFTER a Sabbath—ſuch a one I never knew before——ſpent in an entire ſecluſion from the houſe and ordinances of my God, I ſeek Chriſtian converſe with you, in a way in which I am yet permitted to have intercourſe with my brethren. The day after I wrote to you laſt, my medical attendant laid me under the ſtricteſt injunctions not to ſpeak again in public for one month at leaſt. He ſays that my ſtomach is become ſo irritable, through repeated inflammations, that converſation, unleſs managed with great caution, would be dangerous;—that he does not think my preſent condition alarming, provided I take reſt, but without that, he intimated my life was in great danger. He forbids my expoſing myſelf to the evening air, on any account, and going out of doors, or to the door, unleſs when the air is dry and clear, ſo that I am, during the weather we now have in Birmingham, (very foggy) a complete priſoner; and the repeated cautions from my dear and affectionate friends, whoſe ſolicitude, I conceive, far exceeds the danger, compel me to a rigid obſervance of the Doctor's rules.

This

This morning brother Pope took my place; and in the afternoon Mr. Brewer, who has discovered uncommon tenderness and respect for me and the people, since he knew my state, preached a very affectionate sermon from 1 Sam. iii. 18. "It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good." By what I hear, his sympathizing observations, in relation to the event which occasioned his being then in the pulpit, drew more tears from the people's eyes, than a dozen such poor creatures as their pastor could deserve. But I have.... blessed be God! long had the satisfaction of finding myself embosomed in friendship... the friendship of the people of my charge: though I lament that their love should occasion them a pang——but thus it is——our heavenly Father sees that, for our mixed characters, a mixed state is best.

I anticipated a day of gloom, but I had unexpected reason to rejoice, that the shadow of death was turned into the joy of the morning; and though I said, with perhaps before unequalled feeling, "How amiable are thy tabernacles!" yet I found the God of Zion does not neglect the dwellings of Jacob. My poor wife was much affected at so novel a thing as leaving me behind her, and so it was a dewy morning; but the Sun of Righteousness soon arose, and shed such ineffable delight throughout my soul, that I could say, 'It is good to be *here*.'—Motive to resignation and gratitude also, crowded upon motive, till my judgment was convinced, that I ought to rejoice in the Lord exceedingly, and so my whole soul took its fill of joy. May I, if it be my Saviour's will, feel as happy when I come to die! When my poor Sarah lay at the point of death, for some days after her first lying in, toward the latter days, I enjoyed such support, and felt my will so entirely bowed down to that of God, that I said in my heart, 'I shall never fear another trial—he that sustained me amidst this flame, will defend

defend me from every ſpark!' and this confidence I long enjoyed.—But that was near *ſix* years ago, and I had almoſt forgotten the land of the Hermonites, and the hill Mizar. But the Lord has prepared me to receive a freſh diſplay of his fatherly care, and his (ſhall I call it?) punctilious veracity. If I ſhould be raiſed up again, I ſhall be able to preach on the faithfulneſs of God more experimentally than ever. Perhaps ſome trial is coming on, and I am to be inſtrumental in preparing them for it: Or if not, if I am to depart hence to be no more ſeen, I know the Lord can carry on his work as well without me as with me. He who redeemed the ſheep with his blood, will never ſuffer them to periſh for want of ſhepherding, eſpecially ſince he himſelf is the chief Shepherd of ſouls. But my *Family!* Ah, *there* I find my faith but ſtill imperfect. However, I do not think the Lord will ever take me away, till he helps me to leave my fatherleſs children in his hands, and truſt my widow alſo with him. "His love in times paſt," and I may add in times *preſent* too, "forbids me to think, he will leave me at *laſt*, in trouble to ſink."

Whilſt my weakneſs was gaining ground, I uſed to aſk myſelf, how I could like to be laid by? I have dreamed that this was the caſe, and both awake and aſleep, I felt as though it were an evil that could not be borne:—but now, I find the Lord can fit the back to the burden, and though I think I love the thought of ſerving Chriſt at this moment better than ever, yet he has made me willing to be .... nothing, if he pleaſe to have it ſo; and now my happy heart "could ſing itſelf away to everlaſting bliſs."

O what a mercy that I have not brought on my affliction by ſerving the *devil*. What a mercy that I have ſo many dear ſympathizing friends! What a mercy that I have ſo much dear domeſtic comfort! What a mercy that I am in no violent bodily pain! What

What a mercy that I can read and write, without doing myself an injury! What a mercy that my animal spirits have all the time this has been coming on, (ever since the last Kettering meeting of ministers) been vigorous—free from dejection! And, which I reckon among the greatest of this day's privileges, what a mercy that I have been able to employ myself for Christ and his dear cause to-day, as I have been almost wholly occupied in the concerns of the (I hope) *reviving* church at Bromsgrove; and the infant church at Cradley! O my dear brother, it is *all* mercy, is it not? O help me then in his praise, for he is good, for his mercy endureth for ever.

Ought I to apologize for this experimental chat with you, who have concerns to transact of so much more importance, than any that are confined to an individual? Forgive me if I have intruded too much on your time—but do not forget to praise on my behalf a faithful God. I shall now leave room against I have some business to write about—till then, adieu—but let us not forget, that *this God is our God for ever and ever*, and will be *our guide* even until death. Amen. Amen. We shall soon meet in heaven.

S. P.

To Mr. KING.

Plymouth, April 23, 1799.

My very dear friend and brother,

I HAVE the satisfaction to inform you, that at length my complaint appears to be removed, and that I am, by degrees, returning to my usual diet, by which, with the divine blessing, I hope to be again strengthened for the discharge of the duties, and the

enjoyment of the pleasures, which await me among the dear people of my charge.

I am indeed informed by my medical attendant here, that I shall never be equal to the labours of my past years, and that my return to moderate efforts must be made by slow degrees. As the path of duty, I desire to submit; but after so long a suspension from serving the Redeemer in his church, my soul pants for usefulness more extensive than ever, and I long to become an apostle to the world. I do not think I ever prized the ministerial work so much as I now do. Two questions have been long before me. The first was, Shall I live or die? The second, If I live, how will my life be spent? With regard to the former, my heart answered, "It is no matter—all is well—for my own sake, I need not be taught that it is best to be with Christ; but for the sake of others, it may be best to abide in the body—I am in the Lord's hands, let him do by me as seemeth him best for me and mine, and for his cause and honour in the world? But as to the second question, I could hardly reconcile myself to the thoughts of living, unless it were to promote the interest of my Lord; and if my disorder should so far weaken me, as to render me incapable of the ministry, nothing then appeared before me but gloom and darkness. However, I will hope in the Lord, that though he hath chastened me sorely, yet, since he hath not given me over unto death, sparing mercy will be followed with strength, that I may shew forth his praise in the land of the living.

I am still exceedingly weak; more so than at any period before I left home, except the first week of my lying by; but I am getting strength, though slowly. It is impossible at present to fix any time for my return. It grieves me that the patience of the dear people should be so long tried, but the trial is as great on my

my part as it can be on theirs, and we muſt pity and pray for one another. It is now a taſk for me to write at all, or this ſhould have been longer.

S. P.

To Mr. POPE.

Plymouth, May 24, 1799.

I CANNOT write much—this I believe is the only letter I have written (except to my wife) ſince I wrote to you laſt. My complaint has iſſued in a confirmed, ſlow, nervous fever, which has waſted my ſpirits and ſtrength, and taken a great part of the little fleſh I had when in health away from me. The ſymptoms have been very threatening, and I have repeatedly thought that let the phyſician do what he will, he cannot keep me long from thoſe heavenly joys, for which, bleſſed be God, I have lately been much longing; and were it not for my *dear people* and *family*, I ſhould have earneſtly prayed for leave to depart, and be with Chriſt, which is ſo much better than to abide in this vain, ſuffering, ſinning world.

The doctors, however, now pronounce my caſe very hopeful—ſay there is little or no danger—but that all theſe complaints require a *great deal of time* to get rid of. I ſtill feel myſelf on precarious ground, but quite reſigned to the will of *Him*, who, unworthy as I am, continues daily to "fill my ſoul with joy and peace in believing." Yes, my dear friend! *now* my ſoul feels the value of a free, full, and everlaſting ſalvation, and what is more, I do *enjoy* that ſalvation, while I reſt all my hope on the Son of God in human nature, dying on the croſs for me. To me now, health or ſickneſs, pain

pain or eaſe, life or death are things indifferent. I feel ſo happy in being in the hands of Infinite Love, that when the ſevereſt ſtrokes are laid upon me, I receive them with pleaſure, becauſe they come from my heavenly Father's hands! "O! to grace how great a debtor," &c.

To Dr. RYLAND.

My very dear brother, *Birmingham, July* 20, 1799.

YOUR friendly anxieties on my behalf demand the earlieſt ſatisfaction. We had a pleaſant ride to Newport on the afternoon we left you, and the next day without much fatigue reached Tewkſbury; but the road was ſo rough from Tewkſbury to Eveſham, that it wearied and injured me more than all the jolting we had had before put together. However, we reached Alceſter on Wedneſday evening, ſtopped there a day to reſt, and laſt night (Friday) were brought ſafely hither, bleſſed be God!

I find myſelf getting weaker and weaker, and ſo my Lord inſtructs me in his pleaſure to remove me ſoon. You ſay well, my dear brother, that at ſuch a proſpect, I "cannot *complain*." No, bleſſed be His dear name, who ſhed his blood for me, he helps me to rejoice, at times, with joy unſpeakable. Now I ſee the value of the religion of the Croſs. It is a religion for a dying ſinner. It is all the moſt guilty, the moſt wretched can deſire. Yes, I taſte its ſweetneſs, and enjoy its fulneſs, with all the gloom of a dying bed before me. And far rather would I be the poor emaciated and emaciating creature that I am, than be an Emperor, with every earthly good about him .... but without a God!

I was

I was delighted the other day, in re-peruſing the Pilgrim's Progreſs, to obſerve that when *Chriſtian* came to the top of the hill *Difficulty*, he was put to ſleep in a chamber called *Peace*. Why how good is the Lord of the way to me! ſaid I; I have not reached the ſummit of the hill yet, but notwithſtanding he puts me to ſleep in the chamber of Peace *every night*. . . .True, it is often a chamber of *pain*; but let pain be as formidable as it may, it has never yet been able to expel that peace, which the great Guardian of Iſrael has appointed to keep my heart and mind through Chriſt Jeſus.

I have been labouring lately to exerciſe moſt love to God when I have been ſuffering moſt ſeverely:—but, what ſhall I ſay? Alas, too often the ſenſe of pain abſorbs every other thought. Yet there have been ſeaſons when I have been affected with ſuch a delightful ſenſe of the lovelineſs of God as to raviſh my ſoul and give predominance to the ſacred paſſion.—It was never till to-day that I got any perſonal inſtruction from our Lord's telling Peter by *what death* he ſhould glorify God. O what a ſatisfying thought is it, that God appoints thoſe means of diſſolution whereby he gets moſt glory to himſelf. It was the very thing I needed; for of all the ways of dying, that which I moſt dreaded was by a conſumption; (in which it is now highly probable my diſorder will iſſue.) But, O my dear Lord, *if* by *this death* I can moſt *glorify thee*, I prefer it to all others, and thank thee that by this mean thou art haſtening my fuller enjoyment of thee in a purer world.

A *ſinleſs* ſtate! "O 'tis a heaven worth dying for!" I cannot realize any thing about heaven, but the preſence of Chriſt and his people, and a perfect deliverance from ſin, and I want no more—I am ſick of ſinning—ſoon I ſhall be beyond its power. "O joyful hour! O bleſt abode! I ſhall be near and *like* my God!"

I only thought of filling one side—and now have not left room to thank you and dear Mrs. Ryland for the minute, affectionate and constant attentions you paid us in Bristol. May the Lord reward you. Our hearty love to all around, till we meet in heaven.

Eternally yours in Christ,

S. P.

To Dr. RYLAND.

My very dear Brother, *Birmingham, Aug. 4, 1799. Lord's Day Evening.*

STILL, I trust, hastening to the land "where there shall be no more curse," I take this opportunity of talking a little with you on the road, for we are fellow-travellers, and a little conversation by the way will not lose me the privilege of getting first to the end of my journey.

It is seventeen years within about a week since I first actually set out on my pilgrimage; and when I review the many dangers to which, during that time, I have been exposed, I am filled with conviction that I have all along been the care of Omnipotent Love. Ah how many Pliables, and Timorouses, and Talkatives have I seen, while my quivering heart said, "Alas! I shall soon follow these sons of apostasy, prove a disgrace to religion, and have my portion with hypocrites at last."

These fears may have had their uses—may have made me more cautious, more distrustful of myself, and kept me more dependent on the Lord. Thus

"All that I've met has work'd for my good."

With

With what intricacy, to our view, and yet with what actual skill and goodness, does the Lord draw his plans, and mark out our path! Here we wonder and complain—Soon we shall all agree that it was a right path to the city of habitation; and what we now most deeply regret, shall become the subject of our warmest praises.

I am afraid to come back again to life. O how many dangers await me! Perhaps I may be overcome of some fleshly lust—perhaps I may get proud and indolent, and be more of the priest than of the evangelist—surely I rejoice in feeling my outward man decay, and having the sentence of death in myself. O what prospects are before me in the blessed world whither I am going! To be *holy* as *God is holy*—to have nothing but holiness in my nature—to be assured, without a doubt, and eternally to carry about this assurance with me, that the pure God looks on me with constant complacency, for ever blesses me, and says, as at the first creation, "It is very good." I am happy now in hoping in the divine purposes towards me; but I know, and the thought is my constant burden, that the Being I love best, always sees something in me which he *infinitely hates*. "O wretched, wretched man that I am!" The thought even now makes me weep, and who can help it, that seriously reflects, he never comes to God to pray or praise, but he brings what his God detests along with him—carries it with him wherever he goes, and can never get rid of it as long as he lives? Come, my dear brother! will you not share my joy, and help my praise, that soon I shall leave this body of sin and death behind, to enter on the perfection of my spiritual nature; and patiently to wait till this natural body shall become a spiritual body, and so be a fit vehicle for my immortal and happy spirit!

But I muſt forbear—I have been very unwell all day; but this evening God has kindly given me a reſpite—my fever is low and my ſpirits are cheerful, ſo I have indulged myſelf in unboſoming my feelings to my dear friend.

S. P.

MEMORANDA;

Taken down occaſionally by Mrs. PEARCE, *within four or five weeks of Mr.* PEARCE'S *death.*

HE once ſaid, "I have been in darkneſs two or three days, crying, O when wilt thou comfort me! but laſt night the miſt was taken from me, and the Lord ſhone in upon my ſoul. O that I could but ſpeak, I would tell a world to truſt a faithful God. Sweet affliction, now it worketh *glory, glory!*"

Mrs. P. having told him the various exerciſes of her mind, he replied, "O truſt the Lord, if he lifts up the light of his countenance upon you, as he has done upon me this day, all your mountains will become molehills. I feel your ſituation, I feel your ſorrows; but he who takes care of ſparrows, will care for you and my dear children."

When ſcorching with burning fever, he ſaid, "Hot and happy."—One Lord's day morning he ſaid, "Cheer up, my dear, think how much will be ſaid today of the faithfulneſs of God. Though *we* are called to ſeparate, *he* will never ſeparate from you. I wiſh I could tell the world what a good and gracious God he is. Never need they, who truſt in him, be afraid of trials. He has promiſed to give ſtrength for the

the day; that is his promise. O what a lovely God! and he is *my* God and *yours*. He will never leave us nor forsake us, no, never! I have been thinking that this and that medicine will do me good, but what have I to do with it? It is in my Jesus's hands; he will do it all, and there I leave it. What a mercy is it, I have a good bed to lie upon; you, my dear Sarah, to wait upon me; and friends to pray for me. O how thankful should I be for all my pains; I want for nothing: all my wishes are anticipated. O I have felt the force of those words of David, "Unless thy law, (my gracious God!) had been my delights, I should have perished in mine affliction." Though I am too weak to read it, or hear it, I can think upon it, and O how good it is!—I am in the best hands I could be in, in the hands of my dear Lord and Saviour, and he will do all things well. Yes, yes, he cannot do wrong."

One morning Mrs. P. asked him how he felt?—"Very ill, but unspeakably happy in the Lord, and *my* dear *Lord Jesus*." Once beholding her grieving, he said, "O my dear Sarah, do not be so anxious, but leave me entirely in the hands of Jesus, and think, if you were as wise as he, you would do the same by me. If he takes me, I shall not be lost, I shall only go a little before; we shall meet again, never to part."

After a violent fit of coughing he said, "It is all well; O what a good God is he! It is done by him, and it must be well—If I ever recover, I shall pity the sick more than ever, and if I do not, I shall go to sing delivering love; so you see it will be all well.—O for more patience! Well, my God is the God of patience, and he will give me all I need. I rejoice it is in my Jesus's hands to communicate, and it cannot be in better. It is my God who gives me patience to bear all his will."

When,

When, after a reſtleſs night, Mrs. P. aſked him, what ſhe ſhould do for him? "You can do nothing, but pray for me, that I may have patience to bear all my Lord's will."—After taking a medicine he ſaid, "If it be the Lord's will to bleſs it, for your ſake, and for the ſake of the dear children, but the Lord's will be done. O I fear I ſin, I diſhonour God by impatience; but I would not for a thouſand worlds ſin in a thought if I could avoid it." Mrs. P. replied, ſhe truſted the Lord would ſtill keep him; ſeeing he had brought him thus far, he would not deſert him at laſt. "No, no," he ſaid, "I hope he will not. As a father pitieth his children, ſo the Lord pitieth them that fear him. Why do I complain? My dear Jeſus's ſufferings were much ſorer and more bitter than mine; *And did he thus ſuffer and ſhall I repine!* No, I will cheerfully ſuffer my Father's will."

One morning after being aſked how he felt, he replied, "I have but one ſevere pain about me! what a mercy! O how good a God to afford ſome intervals amidſt ſo much pain! He is altogether good. Jeſus lives, my dear, and that muſt be our conſolation."—After taking a medicine which operated very powerfully, he ſaid, "This will make me ſo much lower; well, let it be. Multiply my pains, thou good God, ſo thou art but glorified, I care not what I ſuffer; all is right."

Being aſked how he felt after a reſtleſs night, he replied, "I have ſo much weakneſs and pain, I have not had much enjoyment; but I have a full perſuaſion that the Lord is doing all things well. If it were not for ſtrong confidence in a lovely God, I muſt ſink; but all is well. O bleſſed God, I would not love thee leſs; O ſupport a ſinking worm! O what a mercy to be aſſured that all things are working together for good."

Mrs.

Mrs. P. saying, If we must part, I trust the separation will not be for ever; "O no," he replied, "we sorrow not as those who have no hope." She said, Then you can leave me and your dear children with resignation, can you? He answered, "My heart was pierced through with many sorrows, before I could give you and the dear children up; but the Lord has heard me say, Thy will be done; and I now can say, blessed be his dear name, I have none of my own."

His last day, Oct. 10, was very happy; Mrs. P. repeated this verse,

Since all that I meet shall work for my good,
The bitter is sweet, the med'cine is food,
Though painful at present, 'twill cease before long,
And then, O how pleasant, the conqueror's song.

He repeated with an inexpressible smile, the last line, "*The conqueror's song.*"

He said once, "O my dear! what shall I do? But why do I complain? He makes all my bed in my sickness." She then repeated those lines,

Jesus can make a dying bed,
Feel soft as downy pillows are.

"Yes," he replied, "he can; he does; I feel it."

E N D.

THREE

OCCASIONAL SERMONS.

I. THE QUALIFICATIONS AND ENCOURAGEMENT OF A FAITHFUL MINISTER, ILLUSTRATED BY THE CHARACTER AND SUCCESS OF BARNABAS.

Delivered at the Settlement of the Rev. ROBERT FAWKNER, in the Paſtoral Office, over the Baptiſt Church at *Thorn*, in Bedfordſhire, October 31, 1787.

II. THE PERNICIOUS INFLUENCE OF DELAY IN RELIGIOUS CONCERNS.

Delivered at a Meeting of Miniſters at *Clipſtone*, in Northamptonſhire, April 27, 1791.

III. THE IMPORTANCE OF A DEEP AND INTIMATE KNOWLEDGE OF DIVINE TRUTH.

Delivered at an Aſſociation of Baptiſt Miniſters and Churches, at *St. Alban's*, Hertfordſhire, June 1, 1796.

By ANDREW FULLER.

BOSTON:
PRINTED BY MANNING & LORING.

SERMON I.

The Qualifications and Encouragement of a faithful Miniſter, illuſtrated by the Character and Succeſs of Barnabas.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

IT is a very important work to which you are this day ſet apart. I feel the difficulty of your ſituation. You need both counſel and encouragement; I wiſh I were better able to adminiſter both. In what I may offer, I am perſuaded you will allow me to be free; and underſtand me, not as aſſuming any authority or ſuperiority over you, but only as ſaying that to you, which I wiſh to conſider as equally addreſſed to myſelf.

Out of a variety of topics that might afford a leſſon for a Chriſtian miniſter, my thoughts have turned on this occaſion upon that of *example*. Example has a great influence upon the human mind: examples from ſcripture eſpecially, wherein characters the moſt illuſtrious in their day for gifts, grace, and uſefulneſs, are drawn with the pencil of inſpiration, have an aſſimilating tendency. Viewing theſe, under a divine bleſſing, we form ſome juſt conceptions of the nature and importance of our work, are led to reflect upon our own defects, and feel the fire of holy emulation kindling in our boſoms.

The

The particular example, my brother, which I wish to recommend to your attention is that of *Barnabas*, that excellent servant of Christ, and companion of the apostle Paul. You will find his character particularly given in

ACTS xi. 24.

——*He was a good man, full of the Holy Ghost, and of faith; and much people was added unto the Lord.*

WERE we to examine the life of this great and good man, as related in other parts of scripture, we should find the character here given him abundantly confirmed. He seems to have been one of that great company, who, through the preaching of Peter and the other apostles, submitted to Christ soon after his ascension. He gave early proof of his love to him, by selling his possessions, and laying the price at the apostles' feet, for the support of his infant cause. As he loved Christ, so he loved his people. He appears to have possessed much of the tender and affectionate, on account of which he was called *Barnabas, a son of consolation.** Assiduous in discovering and encouraging the first dawnings of God's work, he was the first person that introduced Saul into the company of the disciples.† The next news that we hear of him is in the passage which I have selected. Tidings came to the ears of the church at Jerusalem of the word of the Lord being prosperous at *Antioch*, in Syria. The church at Jerusalem was the mother church, and felt a concern for others like that of a tender mother towards her infant offspring. The young converts at Antioch wanted a nursing father; and who so proper to be sent as *Barnabas?* He goes—and, far from envying the success of others who had laboured before him, he *was glad to see the grace of God* so evidently appear;

* Acts iv. 36, 37. † ix. 27.

appear; *and exhorted them, with full purpose of heart to cleave unto the Lord.*—As a preacher, he does not seem to have been equal to the apostle Paul;* yet, so far was he from caring about being eclipsed by Paul's superior abilities, that he went in search of him, and brought him to Antioch to assist him in the work of the Lord. It may well be said of such a character, *that he was a good man, full of the Holy Ghost, and of faith*—O that we had more such ministers in the church at this day—that we ourselves were like him! Might we not hope, if that were the case, that, according to God's usual manner of working, more *people would be added to the Lord!*

There are *three* things we see which are said of Barnabas in a way of commendation—he was *a good man, full of the Holy Ghost, and of faith*—thus far he is held up for our example: a *fourth* is added concerning the effects which followed, *and much people was added unto the Lord*—and this seems to be held up for our encouragement. Permit me, my dear brother, to request your candid attention, while I attempt to review these great qualities in Barnabas, and by every motive to enforce them upon you.

I. *He was* A GOOD MAN.—It were easy to prove the necessity of a person being a good man, in order to his properly engaging in the work of the ministry—Christ would not commit his sheep but to one that loved him†—but on this remark I shall not enlarge. I have no reason to doubt, my brother, but that God has given you an understanding to know him that is true, and a heart to love him in sincerity; I trust, therefore, such an attempt on this occasion is needless. Nor does it appear to me to be the meaning of the evangelist. It is not barely meant of Barnabas that he was a *regenerate* man (though that is implied); but

* Acts xiv. 12. † John xxi. 16.

it denotes that he was *eminently* good. We use the word so in common conversation. If we would describe one that more than ordinarily shines in piety, meekness, and kindness, we know not how to speak of him better, than to say, with a degree of emphasis, "he is a *good* man." After this eminency in goodness, brother, may it be your concern and mine daily to aspire!

Perhaps, indeed, we may have sometimes heard this epithet used with a sneer. Persons who take pleasure in treating others with contempt, will frequently, with a kind of proud pity, speak in this manner, "Aye, such a one is a *good* man"—leaving it implied, that goodness is but an indifferent qualification, unless it be accompanied with greatness. But these things ought not so to be. The apostle Paul did not value himself upon those things wherein he differed from other Christians; but upon that which he possessed in common with them, *charity*, or *Christian love: Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.**

My dear brother, VALUE THE CHARACTER OF A GOOD MAN IN ALL THE PARTS OF YOUR EMPLOYMENT; AND ABOVE ALL THOSE THINGS WHICH THE WORLD COUNTS GREAT AND ESTIMABLE. More particularly—

Value it *at home in your family*.—If you walk not closely with God there, you will be ill able to work for him elsewhere. You are lately become the head of a family. Whatever charge it shall please God in the

* 1 Cor. xiii. 1, 2.

the course of your life to place under your care, I trust it will be your concern to recommend Christ and the gospel to them, walk circumspectly before them, constantly worship God with them, offer up secret prayer for them, and exercise a proper authority over them. There is a sort of religious gossiping, which some ministers have indulged to their hurt; loitering about perpetually at the houses of their friends, and taking no delight in their own. Such conduct in a minister and master of a family must of necessity root out all family order, and, to a great degree, family worship; and, instead of endearing him to his friends, it only exposes him to their just censure. Perhaps they know not how to be so plain as to tell him of it at their own houses, but they will think the more, and speak of it, it is likely, to one another, when he is gone.—I trust, my brother, that none of your domestic connexions will have to say when you are gone, "He was loose and careless in his conduct, or sour and churlish in his temper;" but rather, "He was *a good man.*"

Value this character in your *private retirements.*—Give yourself up to *the word of God, and to prayer.* The apostle charged Timothy, saying, *Meditate on these things, give thyself wholly to them,* or *be thou* IN *them*—but this will never be without a considerable share of the *good man.* Your heart can never be *in* those things which are foreign to its prevailing temper; and if your heart is not in your work, it will be a poor lifeless business indeed.—We need not fear exhausting the Bible, or dread a scarcity of divine subjects. If our hearts are but kept in unison with the spirit in which the bible was written, every thing we meet with will be interesting. The more we read, the more interesting it will appear; and the more we know, the more we shall perceive there is to be known.—Beware also, brother, of neglecting secret *prayer.* The fire of devotion will go out, if it be not

kept

kept alive by an habitual dealing with Chriſt. Converſing with men and things may brighten our gifts and parts; but it is converſing with God that muſt brighten our graces. Whatever ardour we may feel in our public work, if this is wanting, things cannot be right, nor can they in ſuch a train come to a good iſſue.

Value it in your *public exerciſes*. It is hard going on in the work of the miniſtry without a good degree of ſpirituality; and yet, conſidering the preſent ſtate of human nature, we are in the greateſt danger of the contrary. Allow me, brother, to mention two things in particular, each of which are directly oppoſite to that ſpirit which I am attempting to recommend. *One* is an *aſſumed earneſtneſs*, or *forced zeal* in the pulpit, which many weak hearers may miſtake for the enjoyment of God. But though we may put on violent emotions; may ſmite with the hand, and ſtamp with the foot; if we are deſtitute of a genuine feeling ſenſe of what we deliver, it will be diſcerned by judicious hearers, as well as by the Searcher of hearts, and will not fail to create diſguſt. If, on the contrary, we feel and realize the ſentiments we deliver, emotions and actions will be the natural expreſſions of the heart; and this will give weight to the doctrines, exhortations, or reproofs which we inculcate; what we ſay will come with a kind of divine authority to the conſciences, if not to the hearts of the hearers.—The *other* is, a being under the influence of *low and ſelfiſh motives* in the exerciſe of our work. This is a temptation againſt which we have ſpecial reaſon to watch and pray. It is right, my brother, for you to be diligent in your public work; to be inſtant in ſeaſon and out of ſeaſon; to preach the goſpel not only at *Thorn*, but in the ſurrounding villages, wherever a door is opened for you: but while you are thus engaged, let it not be from motives of policy, merely to increaſe

increase your auditory; but from love to Christ and the souls of your fellow-sinners. It is this only that will endure reflection in a dying hour. The apostle Paul was charged by some of the Corinthian teachers with being *crafty*, and with having *caught* the Corinthians *with guile:* but he could say in reply to all such insinuations, in behalf of himself and his fellow-labourers, *Our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world.**

Value it in the *general tenor of your behaviour.*—Cultivate a meek, modest, peaceful, and friendly temper. Be generous and humane. Prove by your spirit and conduct that you are a lover of all mankind. To men in general, but especially to the poor and the afflicted, *be pitiful, be courteous.* It is this, my brother, that will recommend the gospel you proclaim. Without this, could you preach with the eloquence of an angel, you may expect that no good end will be answered.

Prize the character of the *good man, above worldly greatness.*—It is not sinful for a minister to possess property any more than another man; but to aspire after it is unworthy of his sacred character. Greatness, unaccompanied with goodness, is valued as nothing by the great God. Kings and emperors, where that is wanting, are but great *beasts, horned beasts*, pushing one at another.† When Sennacherib vaunted against the church of God, that he would *enter the forest of her Carmel, and cut down her tall cedars*, the daughter of Zion is commanded to *despise* him. God speaks of him as we should speak of a buffalo, or even of an ass, *I will put my hook in thy nose, and my bridle in*

* 2 Cor. xii. 16, compared with chap. i. 12. See Dr. Owen on Heb. iii. 1. vol. ii. p. 6.

† Dan. viii.

*in thy lips, and will turn thee back by the way by which thou cameſt.** Outward greatneſs, when accompanied with goodneſs, may be a great bleſſing; yet even then, it is the latter, and not the former, that denominates the true worth of a character. Once more,

Value it above *mental greatneſs*, or greatneſs in gifts and parts.—It is not wrong to cultivate gifts; on the contrary, it is our duty ſo to do. But deſirable as theſe are, they are not to be compared with goodneſs. *Covet earneſtly the beſt gifts*, ſays the apoſtle, AND YET SHEW I UNTO YOU A MORE EXCELLENT WAY—viz. *charity*, or *love*. If we improve in gifts and not in grace, to ſay the leaſt, it will be uſeleſs, and perhaps dangerous, both to ourſelves and others. To improve in gifts, that we may be the better able to diſcharge our work, is laudable; but if it be for the ſake of popular applauſe, let us expect a blaſt. Hundreds of miniſters have been ruined by indulging a thirſt for the character of *the great man*, while they have neglected the far ſuperior character of *the good man*.—Another part of the character of *Barnabas* was, that he was,

II. FULL OF THE HOLY GHOST.—The Holy Ghoſt ſometimes denotes his extraordinary gifts, as in Acts xix.—where the apoſtle Paul put the queſtion to ſome believers in Chriſt, whether they had received the Holy Ghoſt; but here it ſignifies his indwelling and ordinary operations, or what is elſewhere called *an unction from the Holy One*.† This, though more common than the other, is far more excellent. Its fruits, though leſs brilliant, are abundantly the moſt valuable. To be able to ſurmount a difficulty by Chriſtian patience, is a greater thing in the ſight of God than to remove a mountain. Every work of God bears ſome mark of Godhead, even a thiſtle or a nettle; but there are

* Iſaiah xxxvii. 29. † 1 John, ii. 20.

are some works of God which bear a peculiar likeness to his holy moral character; such were the minds of men and angels in their original state. This will serve to illustrate the subject in hand. The extraordinary gifts of the Holy Spirit, are a communication of his *power;* but in his dwelling in the saints, and the ordinary operations of his grace, he communicates his own *holy nature;* and this it was of which Barnabas was full. To be full of the Holy Ghost, is to be full of the *dove*, as I may say; or full of those fruits of the Spirit mentioned by the apostle to the Galatians, viz. *love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness.*

To be sure, the term *full* is not here to be understood in an unlimited sense; not in so ample a sense as when it is applied to Christ. He was *filled* with the Spirit without measure, but we in measure. The word is doubtless to be understood in a comparative sense, and denotes as much as that he was habitually under his holy influence. A person that is greatly under the influence of the love of this world, is said to be *drunken* with its cares or pleasures. In allusion to something like this, the apostle exhorts that we *be not drunken with wine, wherein is excess; but* FILLED *with the Spirit.** The word *filled* here is very expressive; it denotes, I should think, a being *overcome* as it were with the holy influences and fruits of the blessed Spirit. How necessary is all this, my brother, in your work; O, how necessary is *an unction from the Holy One!*

It is this that will enable you to *enter into the spirit of the gospel*, and *preserve you from destructive errors* concerning it.—Those who have an unction from the Holy One, are said to *know all things; and the anointing which they have received abideth in them, and they need not that any man teach them: but, as the same anointing teacheth*

* Eph. v. 18.

*teacheth them all things, and is truth, and is no lie.** — We shall naturally fall in with the dictates of that Spirit of which we are full. It is for want of this, in a great measure, that the scriptures appear strange, and foreign, and difficult to be understood. He that is full of the Holy Ghost, has the contents of the Bible written, as I may say, upon his heart; and thus its sacred pages are easy to be understood, *as wisdom is easy to him that understandeth.*

It is no breach of charity to say, that if the professors of Christianity had more of the Holy Spirit of God in their hearts, there would be a greater harmony amongst them respecting the great truths which he has revealed. The rejection of such doctrines as the exceeding sinfulness of sin, the total depravity of mankind, the proper Deity and atonement of Christ, justification by faith in his name, the freeness and sovereignty of grace, and the agency of the Holy Spirit, may easily be accounted for upon this principle. If we are destitute of the Holy Spirit, we are blind to the loveliness of the divine character, and destitute of any true love to God in our hearts; and if destitute of this, we shall not be able to see the reasonableness of that law, which requires love to him with all the heart; and then, of course, we shall think lightly of the nature of those offences committed against him: — we shall be naturally disposed to palliate and excuse our want of love to him, yea, and even our positive violations of his law; it will seem hard, very hard indeed, for such little things as these to be punished with everlasting destruction. And now, all this admitted, we shall naturally be blind to the necessity and glory of salvation by Jesus Christ. If sin is so trifling an affair, it will seem a strange and incredible thing that God should become incarnate to atone for it. And hence we shall be very easily persuaded to consider

* 1 John, ii. 20, 27.

sider Christ as only a good man, who came into the world to set us a good example; or, however, that he is not equal with the Father. The freeness and sovereignty of grace also, together with justification by imputed righteousness, will be a very strange sound in our ears. Like the Jews, we shall *go about to establish our own righteousness, and shall not submit to the righteousness of God.* It will seem equally strange and incredible to be told, that we are by nature utterly unfit for the kingdom of God—that, therefore, we *must* be born again—that we are so bad, that we cannot even come to Christ for life, except the Father draw us—yea, and that our best doings, after all, are unworthy of God's notice. It will be no wonder, if, instead of these unwelcome and humiliating doctrines, we should fall in with those writers and preachers who think more favourably of our condition, and the condition of the world at large; who either deny eternal punishment to exist, or represent men in general, as being in little or no danger of it. And having avowed these sentiments, it will then become necessary to compliment their abettors (including ourselves in the number) as persons of a more rational and liberal way of thinking than other people.

My dear brother, of all things be this your prayer, *Take not thy Holy Spirit from me!* If once we sink into such a way of performing our public work, as to do without his enlightening and enlivening influences, we *may* go on, and probably *shall* go on, from one degree of evil to another. Knowing how to account for the operations of our own minds, without imputing them to a divine agency, we shall be inclined in this manner to account for the operations in the minds of others; and so, with numbers in the present age, may soon call in question even *whether there be any Holy Ghost.*

But farther, A being full of the Holy Ghoſt will give *a holy tincture to your meditation and preaching.*--- There is ſuch a thing as the mind being habitually under the influence of divine things; and retaining ſo much of a ſavour of Chriſt, as that divine truths ſhall be viewed and expreſſed, as I may ſay, in their own language. Spiritual things will be *ſpiritually diſcerned*; and if ſpiritually diſcerned, will be ſpiritually communicated. There is more in our *manner* of thinking and ſpeaking upon divine truth than, perhaps, at firſt ſight, we are aware of. A great part of the phraſeology of ſcripture is by ſome accounted unfit to be addreſſed to a modern ear; and is on this account to a great degree laid aſide, even by thoſe who profeſs to be ſatisfied with the ſentiments therein contained. Whatever may be ſaid in defence of this practice in a very few inſtances, ſuch as thoſe where words in a tranſlation are become obſolete, or convey a different idea from what they did at the time of being tranſlated, I am ſatisfied the practice in general is very pernicious. There are many ſermons that cannot fairly be charged with untruth, which yet have a tendency to lead off the mind from the ſimplicity of the goſpel. If ſuch ſcripture terms, for inſtance, as *holineſs*, *godlineſs*, *grace*, *believers*, *ſaints*, *communion with God*, &c. ſhould be thrown aſide as ſavouring too much of cant and enthuſiaſm, and ſuch terms as *morality*, *virtue*, *religion*, *good men*, *happineſs of mind*, &c. ſubſtituted in their room, it will have an amazing effect upon the hearers. If ſuch preaching is the goſpel, it is the goſpel heathenized, and will tend to heathenize the minds of thoſe who deal in it. I do not mean to object to the uſe of theſe latter terms in their place; they are ſome of them ſcriptural terms: what I object to is putting them in the place of the other, when diſcourſing upon evangelical ſubjects. To be ſure, there is a way of handling divine ſubjects after this ſort that is very clever, and very ingenious; and a miniſter of ſuch a ſtamp may commend himſelf

by

by his ingenuity to many hearers: but after all, God's truths are never so acceptable and savoury to a *gracious* heart, as when clothed in their own native phraseology. The more you are filled, my brother, with an unction from the Holy One, the greater relish you will possess for that savoury manner of conveying truth which is so plentifully exemplified in the holy scriptures. Farther,

It is this that will make the doctrines you preach, and the duties you inculcate, seem *fitted in your lips*; I allude to a saying of the wise man, (Prov. xxii. 18.) *The words of the wise are pleasant, if thou keep them within thee; they shall withal be fitted in thy lips.* It is expected there should be an agreement between the character of the speaker and the things which are spoken. *Excellent speech becometh not a fool.* Exhortations to holiness come with an ill grace from the lips of one who indulges himself in iniquity. The opposite of this is what I mean by the doctrines and duties of religion being *fitted in your lips.* It is this that will make your face shine, when you come forth in your public labours, like the face of Moses when he had been conversing with God in the holy mount.

It is this that will give *a spiritual savour to your conversation*, in your visits to your friends.—Though religious visits may be abused; yet you know, brother, the necessity there is for them, if you would understand the spiritual condition of those minds you preach to. There are many faults likewise that you may discover in individuals, which it would be unmanly, as well as unfriendly, to expose in a pointed manner in the pulpit, which, nevertheless, ought not to be passed by unnoticed. Here is work for your private visits; and, in proportion as you are filled with the Holy Ghost, you will possess a spirit of love and faithfulness, which is absolutely necessary to successful reproof.—

It

It is in our private visits also that we can be free with our people, and they with us. Questions may be asked and answered, difficulties discussed, and soul-concerns talked over. Paul taught the Ephesians, not only publickly, but *from house to house.** Now, it is a being full of the Holy Spirit that will give a spiritual savour to all this conversation. It will be as the holy anointing oil on Aaron's garments, which diffused a savour to all around him.

It is this that will teach you *how you ought to behave yourself* in every department you are called to occupy. It will serve instead of ten thousand rules; and all rules without it will be of no account. This it is that will teach you to be of a meek, mild, peaceful, humble spirit. It will make such a spirit be natural to you. *As touching brotherly love*, said the apostle to the Ephesians, *you need not that I write unto you, for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another.*†

In short, it is this that will denominate you *the man of God*. Such was Barnabas, and such, my brother, was your predecessor, whose memory is dear to many of us;‡ and such, according to all that I have heard, was his predecessor, whose memory is equally dear to many here present.§ Each, in his day, was a burning and shining light; but they shine here no more. May you, my brother, and each of us, be followers of them as they also were of Christ!—Another part of the character of Barnabas is,

III. He

* Acts xx. 20. † 1 Thes. iv. 9.

‡ The Rev. *David Evans*, who was ordained pastor of the church at Thorn, August 7, 1782, and died February 21, 1787, aged 31.

§ The Rev. *Wm. Butfield*, who was ordained pastor of the church at Thorn, Feb. 15, 1775, and died March 23, 1778, of the Small-Pox, aged 30.

III. He was *full of faith.*—It may be difficult to ascertain with precision, the real intent and extent of this term; but I should think, in this connexion, it includes at least the three following ideas: a mind occupied with divine sentiment—a being rooted and grounded in the truth of the gospel—and a daily living upon it. The first of these ideas distinguished him from those characters whose minds are void of principle; the next from such who are always hovering upon the borders of skepticism; and the last from such who, though they have no manner of doubts about the truth of the doctrines of the gospel, yet scarcely ever, if at all, feel their vital influence upon their hearts and lives.—Let us review each of these a little more particularly.—*First*, His mind was well *occupied, or stored with divine sentiment.*—How necessary is this to a gospel minister! It is to be feared, that many young men have rushed into the work of the Lord without any decided principles of their own; yea, and have not only set off in such a state of mind, but have continued so all through their lives. Alas, what can the churches expect from such characters? What can such a void produce? How can we feed others with knowledge and understanding, if we are destitute of it ourselves? To say the least, such ministers will be but *unprofitable servants.* But this is not all; a minister that is not inured to think for himself, is constantly exposed to every false sentiment, or system, that happens to be presented to him. We sometimes hear of a person *changing his sentiments;* and doubtless, in many cases, it is just and right he should change them; but there are cases in which that mode of speaking is very improper, for in reality some persons have no sentiments of their own to change; they have only changed the sentiments of some one great man for those of another.

Secondly, He had *a firm perſuaſion of the truth of that goſpel which he preached* to others.—He was rooted and grounded in the goſpel. The great controverſy of that day was, whether the goſpel was true; whether Jeſus was the Meſſiah; whether he, who ſo lately expired on the croſs, was the Son of God; and whether his death was the way for men to obtain eternal life. There were great temptations for a perſon, who ſhould view things through a medium of ſenſe, to think otherwiſe. The popular opinion went againſt it—To the Jews it was a ſtumbling-block, and to the Greeks fooliſhneſs. Thoſe who adhered to the goſpel, thereby expoſed themſelves to cruel perſecutions. But Barnabas *was full of faith*—he was decidedly on the Lord's ſide—he *believed on the Son of God*, and had *the witneſs* of the truth of his goſpel *within himſelf*.*

Preaching the goſpel is bearing a *teſtimony* for God; but we ſhall never be able to do this to any good purpoſe, if we be always heſitating, and indulging a ſkeptical humour. There is no need of a dogmatical over-bearing temper; but there is need of being rooted and grounded in the truths of God. *Be not carried about*, ſaid the apoſtle to the Hebrews, *with ſtrange doctrines; it is a good thing that the heart be eſtabliſhed with grace*.† The contrary deſcribes the character of thoſe who are *ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth*.‡

Thirdly, That goſpel, which he preached to others, *he lived upon* himſelf.—*The word preached*, we are told, *did not profit ſome, becauſe it was not mixed with faith in them that heard it*. This will equally hold good in the caſe of the preacher as of the hearer. If we mix not faith with the doctrine we deliver, it will not profit us. Whatever abilities we may poſſeſs, and of whatever uſe we may be made to others, unleſs we can

* 1 John, v. † Heb. xiii. 9. ‡ 2 Tim. iii. 7.

can say in some sort with the apostle John, *That which we have seen with our eyes, and looked upon, and our hands have handled of the word of life,—that declare we unto you,* our own souls may notwithstanding everlastingly perish! This is a very serious matter; and well deserves our attention as ministers! Professors in the age of Barnabas might be under greater temptations than we are, to question whether Jesus was the true Messiah; but we are under greater temptations than they were of resting in a mere implicit assent to the Christian religion, without realizing and living upon its important truths.

It is a temptation to which we are more than ordinarily exposed, to study divine truth *as preachers* rather than *as Christians;* in other words, to study it for the sake of finding out something to say to others, without so much as thinking of profiting our own souls. If we studied divine truths as Christians, our being constantly engaged in the service of God would be friendly to our growth in grace. We should be *like trees planted by the rivers of waters, that bring forth fruit in their season;* and all that we did would be likely to *prosper.** But if we study it only as preachers, it will be the reverse. Our being conversant with the Bible will be like surgeons and soldiers being conversant with the shedding of human blood, till they lose all sensibility concerning it. I believe it is a fact, that where a preacher is wicked, he is generally the most hardened against conviction of any character whatever. Happy will it be for us, if, like Barnabas, we are *full of faith* in that Saviour whom we recommend, in that gospel which it is our employment to proclaim.

IV. We now come to the last part of the subject, which is held up by way of encouragement—*And much people was added unto the Lord.*—When our ministry

* Psa. i. 2, 3.

istry is blessed to the conversion of sinners, to the bringing them off from their connexion with sin and self to a vital union with Christ; when our congregations are filled not merely with professors of religion, but with sound believers; when such believers come forward, and offer themselves willingly for communion, saying, *We will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you*—then it may be said, that *much people is added unto the Lord*. The connexion between such additions, and eminency in grace and holiness in a minister, deserves our serious attention.

I think it may be laid down as a rule, which both scripture and experience will confirm, that *eminent spirituality in a minister is usually attended with eminent usefulness*. I do not mean to say, our usefulness depends upon our spirituality, as an effect depends upon its cause; nor yet that it is always in proportion to it. God is a sovereign, and frequently sees it proper to convince us of it, in variously bestowing his blessing on the means of grace. But yet he is not wanting in giving encouragement to what he approves, wherever it is found. Our want of usefulness is often to be ascribed to our want of spirituality, much oftener than to our want of natural ability. God has frequently been known to succeed men of but rough parts and abilities, where they have been eminently holy, when he has blasted others of much superior talents, where that has been wanting. Hundreds of ministers, who, on account of their gifts, have promised to be shining characters, have proved the reverse; and all owing to such things as pride, unwatchfulness, carnality, and levity.

Eminency in grace, my brother, will contribute to your success in *three* ways—

First,

First, It will fire your soul with holy *love to Christ, and the souls of men;* and such a spirit is usually attended with success.—I believe you will find, that in almost all the great works which God hath wrought in any period of time, he has honoured men of this character, by making them his instruments. In the midst of a sore calamity upon the murmuring Israelites, when God was inclined to shew mercy, it was by the means of his servant Aaron running with a censer of fire in his hand, and standing between the living and the dead!* The great reformation that was brought about in the days of *Hezekiah*, was by the instrumentality of a man *who wrought that which was good, and right, and true before the Lord his God*—and then it follows, *And in every work that he began in the service of the house of God, and in the law, and in the commandments, to seek his God,* HE DID IT WITH ALL HIS HEART, *and* PROSPERED.†

There was another great reformation in the Jewish church, about the time of their return from Babylon. One of the chief instruments in this work was *Ezra, a ready scribe in the law of his God;* a man who had *prepared his heart to seek the law of the Lord, and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments;*—a man who *fasted and prayed at the river Ahava* previous to his great undertaking;—a man who was afterwards *sorely astonished, and in heaviness, and would eat no meat nor drink water, but fell upon his knees, and spread out his hands unto the Lord his God, on account of the transgressions of the people.*‡ Another great instrument in this work was *Nehemiah*, a man that devoted himself wholly to the service of God and his people, labouring night and day; that was not to be seduced by the intrigues of God's adversaries, nor yet intimidated by their threatenings, but persevered in his work till

* Numb. xvi. 46—50. † 2 Chron. xxxi. 20, 21.

‡ Ezra vii. 10. viii. 10. ix. 5. x. 6.

till it was finiſhed, cloſing his labours with this ſolemn prayer and appeal, *Think upon me, O my God, for good, according to all that I have done for this people.**

Time would fail me to ſpeak of all the great ſouls, both inſpired and uninſpired, whom the King of kings hath delighted to honour—of *Paul*, and *Peter*, and their companions; of *Wickliff*, and *Luther*, and *Calvin*, and many others at the reformation; of *Elliot*, and *Edwards*, and *Brainerd*, and *Whitefield*, and hundreds more, whoſe names are held in deſerved eſteem in the church of God. Theſe were men of God, men who had great grace as well as gifts, whoſe hearts burned in love to Chriſt and the ſouls of men. They looked upon their hearers as their Lord had done upon Jeruſalem, and wept over them.—In this manner they delivered their meſſages—*and much people was added unto the Lord.*

Secondly, Eminency in grace will *direct your ends* to the glory of God, and the welfare of men's ſouls; and where this is the caſe it is uſually attended with a bleſſing. Theſe are ends which God himſelf purſues, and if we purſue the ſame, we are *labourers together with God*, and may hope for his bleſſing to attend our labours; but if we purſue ſeparate and ſelfiſh ends, we walk contrary to God, and may expect that God will walk contrary to us. Whatever apparent ſucceſs may attend a man's labours, whoſe ends are evil, all is to be ſuſpected: either the ſucceſs is not genuine, or if it be, it is not in a way of bleſſing upon him, nor ſhall it turn out at laſt to his account. It muſt be an inexpreſſible ſatisfaction, brother, to be able to ſay, as the primitive miniſters and apoſtles did, *James, a ſervant of God.—Paul, a ſervant of Jeſus Chriſt.—We ſeek not yours, but you!*

Laſtly,

* Neh. iii. iv. v. & vi.

Lastly, Eminency in grace will enable you to *bear* prosperity in your ministry without being lifted up with it; and so contributes towards it.—It is written of Christ in prophecy, *He shall build the temple of the Lord, and shall* BEAR *the glory.*—He does bear it indeed; but to bear glory without being elated is no easy thing for us. I am often afraid lest this should be one considerable reason why most of us have no more real success in our work than we have; perhaps it is not safe for us to be much owned of God; perhaps we have not grace enough to bear prosperity!

My dear brother, permit me to close the whole with a word or two of serious advice.—First, *watch over your own soul as well as the souls of your people.* Do not forget that thought, that it is a temptation to which ministers are peculiarly liable, while they keep the vineyard of others, to neglect their own.—Farther, *Know your own weakness, and depend upon Christ's all-sufficiency.* Your work is great, your trials may be many; but let not your heart be discouraged. Remember what was said to the apostle Paul, *My grace is sufficient for thee, my strength is made perfect in weakness;*—and the reflection which he makes upon it, *When I am weak, then am I strong.**—Finally, *be often looking to the end of your course, and viewing yourself as giving an account of your stewardship.* We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, and give account of the deeds done in the body. Perhaps there is no thought more solemn than this, more suitable to be kept in view in all our undertakings, more awakening in a thoughtless hour, or more cheering to an upright heart.

I have only to request, my dear brother, that you will excuse the freedom of this plain address. I have not

* 2 Cor. xiii. 9. 10.

not ſpoken ſo much to inſtruct you in things which you know not, as to remind and impreſs you with things which you already know. The Lord bleſs you, and grant that the ſolemnities of this day may ever be remembered both by you, and your people, with ſatisfaction. AMEN.

SERMON II.

The pernicious Influence of Delay in religious Concerns.

HAGGAI i. 2.

Thus ſpeaketh the Lord of Hoſts, ſaying, This people ſay, the time is not come, the time that the Lord's houſe ſhould be built.

WHEN the children of Judah were delivered from their captivity, and allowed by the proclamation of Cyrus to return to their own land, one of the principal things which attracted their attention was the re-building of the houſe of God, which had been deſtroyed by the Babylonians. This was a work which Cyrus himſelf enjoined, and which the hearts of the people were much ſet upon. It was not however to be accompliſhed at once; and as the worſhip of God was a matter of immediate and indiſpenſable concern, they ſet up an *altar*, on which to offer ſacrifices, and offerings, till ſuch time as the temple ſhould be built.

In the ſecond year after their return, the foundation of the Lord's houſe was laid; but oppoſition being made to it by the adverſaries of Judah and Benjamin,

the work ceased all the days of Cyrus, until the reign of Darius, commonly distinguished by the name of *Darius-Hystaspis*. During this period, which seems to have been about fourteen years, the people sunk into a spirit of indifference. At first they desisted from necessity; but afterwards, their attention being turned to the building and ornamenting of houses for themselves, they seemed very well contented that the house of the Lord should lie waste. For this their temper and conduct, the land was smitten with barrenness; so that both the vintage and the harvest failed them. God also raised up *Haggai* and *Zechariah* to go and remonstrate against their supineness; and the efforts of these two prophets were the means of stirring up the people to resume the work.*

The argument which the people used against building the house of God, was, that *the time was not come*. It is possible they waited for a counter order from the Persian court; if so, they might have waited long enough. A work of that nature ought to have been prosecuted of their own accord; at least they should have tried. It did not follow, because they were hindered once, therefore they should never succeed. Or, perhaps, they meant to plead their present weakness and poverty.—Something like this seems to be implied in the fourth verse, where they are reminded that they had strength enough to build and ornament houses for themselves. It looks as if they wished to build, and lay by fortunes for themselves and their families, and *then*, at some future time, they might contribute for the building of the house of God.

There is something of this procrastinating spirit that runs through a great part of our life, and is of great detriment to us in the work of God. We know of many things that should be done, and cannot in conscience

* See the iii. iv. and v. chapters of Ezra.

ſcience directly oppoſe them; but ſtill we find excuſes for our inactivity. While we admit that many things ſhould be done which are not done, we are apt to quiet ourſelves with the thought that they need not be done *juſt now.—The time is not come, the time that the Lord's houſe ſhould be built.*

In diſcourſing to you upon the ſubject, brethren, I ſhall take notice of a few of the moſt remarkable caſes in which this ſpirit is diſcovered,—and then endeavour to ſhew its evil nature, and dangerous tendency.

In reſpect to the CASES, OR INSTANCES, IN WHICH IT IS DISCOVERED, a ſmall degree of obſervation on mankind, and of reflection upon the workings of our own hearts, will furniſh us with many of theſe, and convince us of its great influence on every deſcription of men, in almoſt all their religious concerns—Particularly,

Firſt, It is by this plea that *a great part of mankind are conſtantly deceiving themſelves in reſpect to a ſerious attention to their ſouls' concerns.*—The concerns of our ſouls are doubtleſs of the laſt inportance; and there are times in which moſt men not only acknowledge this truth, but in ſome ſort feel the force of it. This is the caſe eſpecially with thoſe who have had a religious education, and have been uſed to attend upon the preaching of the goſpel. They hear from the pulpit that men *muſt* be born again, *muſt* be converted, and become as little children, or never enter into the kingdom of God. Or the ſame things are impreſſed upon them by ſome threatening affliction, or alarming providence. They feel themſelves at thoſe times very unhappy; and it is not unuſual for them to reſolve upon a ſacrifice of their former ſins, and a ſerious and cloſe attention in future to the affairs of their ſouls. They think, while under theſe impreſſions, they *will* conſider their

their ways, they *will* enter their closets, and shut to the door, and pray to the Lord that he would have mercy upon them; but alas, no sooner do they retire from the house of God, or recover from their affliction, but the impression begins to subside, and then matters of this sort become less welcome to the mind. They must not be utterly rejected, but are *let alone for the present.* As conscience becomes less alarmed, and danger is viewed at a greater distance, the sinner by degrees recovers himself from his fright, and dismisses his religious concern in some such manner as *Felix* did his reprover; *Go thy way for this time, when I have a convenient season I will send for thee.*

It is thus with the ardent *youth.*—In the hour of serious reflection, he feels that religion is of importance; but his heart, still averse to what his conscience recommends, rises against the thought of sacrificing the prime of life to the gloomy duties of prayer and self-denial. He does not resolve *never* to attend to these things, but the *time* does not seem to be come. He hopes that God Almighty will excuse him *a few years* at least, and impute his excesses to youthful folly and imbecility.—It is thus with the *man of business.*—There are times in which he is obliged to retire from the hurry of life; and at those times, thoughts of another life may arrest his attention. Conscience at those intervals may smite him for his living without prayer, without reflection, without God in all his thoughts; and what is his remedy? Does he lament his sin, and implore mercy through our Lord Jesus Christ? No, nor so much as promise to forsake it *immediately*; but this he promises, that when *this* busy time is over, and *that* favourite point is gained, and *those* intricate affairs are terminated, then it shall be otherwise.—It is thus with persons in *single life*, they will be better when they get settled in the world;—it is thus with the *incumbered parent*, she looks forward to the time when her family

shall

ſhall get off her hands ;—yea, it is thus with the *drunkard* and the *debauchee*, wearied in their own way, they intend to lead a new life as ſoon as they can but ſhake off their old connexions ;—in ſhort, it is thus with great numbers in all our towns, and villages, and congregations, they put off the great concern to another time, and think they may venture at leaſt a little longer, till all is over with them, and a dying hour juſt awakens them, like the virgins in the parable, to bitter reflection on their own fatal folly.

But, Secondly, This plea not only affects the unconverted, but *prevents us all from undertaking any great or good work for the cauſe of Chriſt, or the good of mankind.*—We ſee many things that ſhould be done, but there are difficulties in the way, and we wait for theſe difficulties being all removed. We are very apt to indulge a kind of prudent caution (ſo we call it) which foreſees and magnifies difficulties beyond what they really are. It is granted there may be ſuch things in the way of an undertaking, as may render it impracticable, and in that caſe it is our duty for the preſent to ſtand ſtill ; but it becomes us to beware leſt we account that impracticable which only requires ſuch a degree of exertion as we are not inclined to give it.—Perhaps the work requires *expenſe*, and covetouſneſs ſays, wait a little longer, till I have gained ſo and ſo in trade, till I have rendered my circumſtances reſpectable, and ſettled my children comfortably in the world. But is not this like ceiling our own houſes, while the houſe of God lies waſte ?—Perhaps it requires *concurrence*, and we wait for every body being of a mind, which is never to be expected. He who, through a dread of oppoſition and reproach, deſiſts from known duty, is in danger of being found amongſt the *fearful, the unbelieving, and the abominable.*

Had

Had *Luther*, and his cotemporaries, acted upon this principle, they had never gone about the glorious work of Reformation. When he saw the abominations of popery, he might have said, "These things ought not to be, but what can *I* do? If the chief priests and rulers in different nations would but unite, something might be effected; but what can *I* do, an individual, and a poor man? I may render myself an oject of persecution, or, which is worse, of universal contempt, and what good end will be answered by it?" Had *Luther* reasoned thus, had he fancied that because princes and prelates were not the first to engage in the good work, therefore the time was not come to build the house of the Lord; the house of the Lord, for any thing he had done, might have lain waste to this day.

Instead of waiting for the removal of difficulties, we ought in many cases to consider them as purposely laid in our way, in order to try the sincerity of our religion. He who had all power in heaven and earth, could have not only sent forth his apostles into all the world, but have so ordered it that all the world should treat them with kindness, and aid them in their mission; but instead of that, he told them to lay their accounts with persecution and the loss of all things. This was, no doubt, to try their sincerity; and the difficulties laid in our way are equally designed to try ours.

Let it be considered whether it is not owing to this principle that so few and so feeble efforts have been made for the propagation of the gospel in the world. When the Lord Jesus commissioned his apostles, he commanded them to—Go, and teach *all nations*, to preach the gospel to *every creature*; and that notwithstanding the difficulties and opposition that would lie in the way. The apostles executed their commission with assiduity and fidelity; but since their days, we seem to sit down half contented that the greater part

of

of the world ſhould ſtill remain in ignorance and idolatry. Some noble efforts indeed have been made, but they are but ſmall in number when compared with the magnitude of the object. And why is it ſo? Are the ſouls of men of leſs value than heretofore? No. Is Chriſtianity leſs true, or leſs important than in former ages? This will not be pretended. Are there no opportunities for ſocieties, or individuals in Chriſtian nations, to convey the goſpel to the heathens? This cannot be pleaded ſo long as opportunities are found to trade with them, yea, and what is a diſgrace to the name of Chriſtians, to buy them, and ſell them, and treat them with worſe than ſavage barbarity! We have opportunities in abundance; the improvement of navigation, and the maritime and commercial turn of of this country, furniſh us with theſe; and it deſerves to be conſidered, whether this is not a circumſtance that renders it a duty peculiarly binding upon us.

The truth is, if I am not miſtaken, we wait for we know not what; we ſeem to think *the time is not come, the time for the Spirit to be poured down from on high.* We *pray* for the converſion and ſalvation of the world, and yet neglect the ordinary means by which thoſe ends have been uſed to be accompliſhed. It pleaſed God, heretofore, by the fooliſhneſs of preaching, to ſave them that believed; and there is reaſon to think it will ſtill pleaſe God to work by that diſtinguiſhed mean. Ought we not then to try, at leaſt, by ſome means, to convey more of the good tidings of ſalvation to the world around us,* than have hitherto been conveyed?

* It may not be amiſs to inform the reader, that at the time of the above diſcourſe being delivered, the Rev. Mr. CAREY of Leiceſter, was preſent After worſhip, when the miniſters were together, he moved the queſtion, "*Whether ſomething might not be done in the way of ſending the goſpel into the heathen world?*" It was well known at the ſame time that Mr. CAREY had written a judicious piece upon the ſubject, which he had by him in manuſcript, ſhewing the duty of Chriſtians in that matter, and the practicability of the undertaking. It was therefore agreed, as the firſt ſtep proper to be taken, that Mr. CAREY be requeſted to reviſe and print his manuſcript.

veyed? The encouragement to the heathen is still in force, *WHOSOEVER SHALL CALL UPON THE NAME OF THE LORD SHALL BE SAVED; but how shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach except they be sent?* Rom. x. 13—15.

Let it be farther considered, whether it is not owing to this principle that so few and so feeble efforts are made for the propagation of the gospel *in places within our reach*.—There are many dark places in our own land, places where priests and people, it is to be feared, are alike destitute of true religion, *all looking to their own way*, every one for *his gain from his quarter*. Were every friend of Jesus Christ to avail himself of that liberty which the laws of his country allow him, and embrace every opportunity for the dissemination of evangelical principles, what effects might we hope to see? Were every true minister of the gospel to make a point of preaching as often as possible in the villages within his reach, and were those private Christians who are situated in such villages to open their doors for preaching, and recommend the gospel by a holy and affectionate behaviour, might we not hope to see the wilderness become as a fruitful field? Surely in these matters we are too negligent.—And when we do preach to the unconverted, we do not feel as if we were to do any good. We are as if we knew not how to get at the hearts and consciences of people. We cast the net, without so much as expecting a draught. We are as those who cannot find their hands in the day of battle; who go forth not like men inured to conquest, but rather like those inured to defeat.—Whence arises all this? Is it not owing, at least a considerable degree of it, to a notion we have, that *the time is not come* for any thing considerable to be effected?

Thirdly,

Thirdly, It is this plea that keeps many from a *public profeſſion of religion, by a practical acknowledgment of Chriſt.*—Chriſt requires of his followers that they confeſs his name before men, that they be baptized, and commemorate his dying love in the ordinance of the Supper. Yet there are many who conſider themſelves as Chriſtians, and are conſidered ſo by others, who ſtill live in the neglect of theſe ordinances. I ſpeak not now of thoſe who conſider themſelves as having been baptized in their infancy, but of ſuch who admit adult immerſion to be the only true baptiſm, and yet do not practiſe it, nor hold communion with any particular church of Chriſt. It is painful to think there ſhould be a deſcription of profeſſed Chriſtians, who live in the neglect of Chriſt's commands. What can be the motives of ſuch neglect? Probably they are various; there is one, however, that muſt have fallen under your obſervation, that is, *the want of ſome powerful impreſſion upon the mind, impelling them, as it were, to a compliance.* Many perſons wait for ſomething of this ſort, and becauſe they go from year to year without it, conclude that *the time is not come*, or that it is not the mind of God that *they* ſhould comply with thoſe ordinances, at leaſt that they ſhould comply with them *at preſent.* Impreſſions, it is allowed, are deſirable, provided it be truth or duty that is impreſſed, otherwiſe they deſerve no regard; but be they as deſirable as they may, the want of them can never juſtify our living in the neglect of known duty. Nor are they at all adapted to ſhew us *what is duty*, but merely to excite to the performance of that which may be proved to be duty without them. We might as well wait for impreſſions, and conclude from the want of them that the time is not come for the performance of other duties, as thoſe of baptiſm and the Lord's ſupper.

Some are kept from a public profeſſion of Chriſt's name by mere mercenary motives. They have relations

tions and friends that would be offended. The fear of being disinherited, or injured in some sort as to worldly circumstances, has made many a person keep his principles to himself, till such time as the party whose displeasure he fears shall be removed out of the way. This is wicked, as it amounts to a denial of Christ before men, and will no doubt expose the party, if he die without repentance for it, to a being denied by Christ before his Father at the last day. *Lord, said one, I will follow thee, but let me first go and bury my father—let me first go and bid them farewell who are at home,* says another. *Jesus answered, Let the dead bury their dead, follow thou me—No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.**

Fourthly, It is this plea that keeps us from a thorough *self examination,* and *self-denial.*—The importance of being right in the sight of God, and our liability to err, even in the greatest of all concerns, renders a close and frequent inquiry into our spiritual state absolutely necessary. It is a dangerous as well as an uncomfortable life to be always in suspense, not knowing what, nor where we are, nor whither we are going. There are seasons too in which we feel the importance of such an inquiry, and think we *will* go about it, we *will* search and try our ways, and turn from our sins, and walk more closely with God. Such thoughts will occur when we hear matters urged home upon us from the pulpit, or when some affecting event draws off our attention from the present world, and causes us to reflect upon ourselves for our inordinate anxiety after it. We think of living otherwise than we have done; but when we come to put our thoughts into execution, we find a number of difficulties in the way, which too often deter us, at least *for the present.* "Here is an undertaking that must first be accomplished before I can *have*

* Luke ix 59—62.

have time; here is also a troublesome affair that I must get through before I can *be composed*; and then, here are such temptations that I know not how to get over *just now*—if I wait a little longer, perhaps they may be removed."—Alas, alas, thus we befool ourselves! thus we put it off to another time, till the impressions on our minds are worn off, and then we are less able to attend to those things than we were at first. As one who puts off the examination of his accounts, and the retrenchment of his expenses, till all on a sudden he is involved in a bankruptcy; so do multitudes in the religious world neglect a close inspection into their souls' concerns, till at length, either a departure from some of the great principles of the gospel, or some foul and open fall, is the consequence.

Finally, It is this principle that keeps us from *preparedness for death*, a being *ready when our Lord shall come.*—There is nothing that Christ has more forcibly enjoined than this duty.—*Be ye also ready, for at such an hour as ye think not, the Son of Man cometh.—What I say unto you I say unto all, Watch.* Why do we not immediately feel the force of these charges, and betake ourselves to habitual watchfulness, and prayer, and self-denial, and walking with God? Why are we not as men who wait for the coming of their Lord? Is it not from a secret thought, that the time is not come? We know we must die, but we consider it as something at a distance; and thus imagining that our Lord delayeth his coming, we delay to prepare to meet him, so that when he cometh he findeth us in confusion. Instead of our loins being girt, and our lights burning, we are engaged in a number of plans and pursuits to the neglect of those things, which, notwithstanding the necessary avocations of life, ought always to engross our supreme attention.

But

But let us next proceed to consider the *EVIL NATURE* and *DANGEROUS TENDENCY* of this procrastinating temper.

I need not say much to prove to you that it is a sin. The conscience of every one of you will assist me in that part of the work. It is proper, however, in order that you may feel it the more forcibly, that you should consider wherein its evil nature consists.

First, It is contrary to the tenor of all God's commandments. All through the scriptures we are required to attend to divine things immediately, and without delay.—*Work while it is called to-day; the night cometh when no man can work—To day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts—While ye have the light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light—Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave whither thou goest.**

God not only requires us in general what we do to do quickly, but calls us to serve him particularly *under those temptations or afflictions*, which we find placed in our way. The terms of discipleship are, *deny thyself, take up thy cross, and follow me.* He does not call upon us to follow him barely when there are no troubles, nor difficulties to encounter, nor allow us, when those difficulties occur, to wait a fairer opportunity; but to take our cross as it were upon our shoulders, and *so* follow him. It would be of use for us to consider every situation as a post in which God hath placed us, and *in which* he calls upon us to serve and glorify him—If we are poor, we are required to glorify God by contentment; if afflicted, by patience; if bereaved, by submission; if persecuted, by firmness; if injured, by forgiveness; or if tempted, by denying ourselves

* John, ix. 4. Psal. xcv. 7, 8. Ecc. ix. 10.

ſelves for his ſake. Nor can theſe duties be performed at any other times; to put them off, therefore, to another opportunity, is the ſame thing in effect, as refuſing to comply with them at all.

Secondly, To put off things to another time, implies a lurking diſlike to the things themſelves. We do not ordinarily do ſo, except in things wherein we have no delight. Whatever our hearts are ſet upon, we are for loſing no time till it is accompliſhed. If the people of Judah had *had a mind to work*, as is ſaid of them on another occaſion, they would not have pleaded that the time was not come. Sinful delay, therefore, ariſes from *alienation of heart from God*, than which nothing can be more offenſive in his ſight.

But farther, it is not only a ſin, but a ſin of *dangerous tendency*.—This is manifeſt by the effects it produces. Precious time is thereby murdered, and valuable opportunities loſt, and loſt beyond recall!

That there are opportunities poſſeſſed both by ſaints and ſinners is plain from the ſcriptures. The former might do abundantly more for God than they do, and might enjoy much more of God and heaven than they actually enjoy; and no doubt it would be ſo, were it not for that idle delaying temper of which we have ſpoken. Like the Iſraelites, we are ſlothful to go up to poſſeſs the good land. Many are the opportunities both of doing and enjoying good, that have already paſſed by. O, what Chriſtians might we have been before now, had we but availed ourſelves of all thoſe advantages, which the goſpel diſpenſation, and the free exerciſe of our religion afford us!

Sinners alſo, as long as life laſts, have opportunity of eſcaping from the wrath to come. Hence they are

are exhorted to *ſeek the Lord while he may be found*, and to *call upon him while he is near*. Hence alſo there is a *door* repreſented as being at preſent *open*, which *the maſter of the houſe will* one day *riſe up and ſhut*. The *fountain* is deſcribed as being at preſent *open for ſin, and for uncleanneſs*; but there is a period approaching, when it ſhall be ſaid, *He that is filthy, let him be filthy ſtill!** It ſeems ſcarcely in the power of language to expreſs the danger of delay in terms more forcible and impreſſive than thoſe which are uſed in the above paſſages.—Nor is there any thing in the idea that claſhes with the ſcripture doctrine of *decrees*. All allow that men have opportunity in natural things, to do what they do not, and to obtain what they obtain not; and if this can be made to conſiſt with an univerſal providence, which *performeth the things that are appointed for us*; why ſhould not the other be allowed to conſiſt with the purpoſes of Him, who does nothing without a plan, but *worketh all things after the counſel of his own will?* A price is in the hands of thoſe who have no heart to get wiſdom.

O thoughtleſs ſinner, trifle no longer with the murder of time! time, ſo ſhort and uncertain in its duration; the morning of your exiſtence, the mould in which you receive an impreſſion for eternity, the only period in which the Son of Man hath power to forgive ſins! Should the remaining part of your life paſs away in the ſame careleſs manner as that has, which is already elapſed, what bitter reflection muſt needs follow! How cutting it muſt be to look back on all the means of ſalvation, as gone for ever; the harveſt paſt, the ſummer ended, and you not ſaved!

Suppoſe a company, at the time of low water, ſhould take an excurſion upon the ſands near the ſea ſhore—Suppoſe yourſelf of the company—Suppoſe, that on a preſumption

* Iſai. lv. 6, 7. Luke xiii. 25. Zech. xiii. 1. Rev. xxii. 11.

presumption of the tide's not returning at present, you should all fall asleep—Suppose all the company, except yourself, to awake out of their sleep, and finding their danger, endeavour to *awake* you, and to persuade you to flee with them for your life—But you, like the sluggard, are for *a little more sleep, and a little more slumber*—the consequence is, your companions escape, but you are left behind to perish in the waters, which, regardless of all your cries, rise and overwhelm you! What a situation would this be! How would you curse that love of sleep that made you refuse to be awaked, that delaying temper that wanted to indulge a little longer! But what is this situation, compared with that of a lost soul? There will come a period when the bottom of the ocean would be deemed a refuge; when to be crushed under falling rocks and mountains, instead of being viewed with terror as heretofore, will be earnestly desired! Yes, desired, but desired in vain! The sinner, who hath *neglected the great salvation*, will not be able to *escape*, nor hide himself *from the face of him that sitteth upon the throne, nor from the wrath of the Lamb!*

My dear hearers! consider your condition without delay—God says to you, *To-day* if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts—*To-day* may be the only day you have to live—Go home, enter the closet, and shut the door—confess your sins—implore mercy through our Lord Jesus Christ—*Kiss the Son lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little; blessed are all they that put their trust in him!*

SERMON III.

The Importance of a deep and intimate Knowledge of Divine Truth.

HEBREWS v. 12, 13, 14.

For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the firſt principles of the oracles of God; and are become ſuch as have need of milk, and not of ſtrong meat. For every one that uſeth milk, is unſkilful in the word of righteouſneſs: for he is a babe. But ſtrong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even thoſe who by reaſon of uſe have their ſenſes exerciſed to diſcern both good and evil.

THERE is nothing in which the kingdom of Chriſt and the kingdom of Satan are more oppoſed, than that the one is characterized by light, and the other by darkneſs. The cauſe of falſehood is itſelf a dark cauſe, and requires darkneſs to cover it: but truth is light, and cometh to the light, that it may be made manifeſt. Knowledge is every where encouraged in the Bible; our beſt intereſts are interwoven with it; and the ſpirituality of our minds, and the real enjoyment of our lives depend upon its increaſe. *Grace and peace are multiplied through the knowledge of God, and of Jeſus our Lord.* Nor is it neceſſary for our own ſakes only, but for the ſake of others. It is

a great encouragement to Christian ministers, when those whom they teach possess a good understanding in the things of God. Indeed, none but those who are engaged in the work of teaching can tell how much the ardour of the mind is damped by the contrary.—The truth of this remark is exemplified in the writer of this epistle. In the verses immediately preceding the text, you perceive him highly interested in his subject, and proceeding in a glorious career of reasoning; when, all on a sudden, he is stopped. He had many things to say of his Lord and Master, but which were *hard to be understood, seeing those to whom he wrote were dull of hearing.* It is on this occasion that he introduces the passage now before us; in which his object is to shame and provoke them, by comparing them with those who, as to years, were men, but, as to knowledge, children; and who, instead of having made advances in science, needed to be taught the alphabet over again. There are some things supposed and included in the passage, which require a little previous attention.

First—It is here supposed, that all divine knowledge is to be derived from *the oracles of God.* It is a proper term by which the sacred scriptures are here denominated, strongly expressive of their divine inspiration and infallibility: in them God speaks; and to them it becomes us to hearken. We may learn other things from other quarters; and things too that may subserve the knowledge of God; but the knowledge of God itself must here be sought, for here only it can be found.

Much has been said of faith and reason, and the question has often been agitated, whether the one, in any instance, can be contrary to the other? In the solution of this question, it is necessary, in the first place, to determine what is meant by reason. There is a great difference between *reason*, and *reasoning*. Noth-

ing

ing which God reveals can contradict the former; but this is more than can be said of the latter. It is impossible for God to reveal any thing repugnant to what is fit and right; but that which is fit and right in one man's estimation, is preposterous and absurd in the esteem of another; which clearly proves, that reason, as it exists in depraved creatures, is not a proper standard of truth; and hence arises the necessity of another and a better standard, *the oracles of God.* By studying these, a good man will gain more understanding than his teachers, if they live in the neglect of them.

Secondly—It is supposed, that the oracles of God include a system of divine truth. They contain the *first principles*, or rudiments, of religion, the simple truths of the gospel, which require little or no investigation in order to their being understood: these are called *milk.* They also contain the deep things of God, things beyond the reach of a slight and cursory observation; and which require, if we would properly enter into them, close and repeated attention; this is *strong meat.* Those doctrines, which the apostle enumerates in the following chapter, as things which he should *leave and go on unto perfection*, have been thought to refer to the leading principles of Judaism: and it may be so; for Judaism itself contained the first principles of Christianity: it was introductory to it; or, as it is elsewhere expressed, it was *our school-master to bring us to Christ.*

Thirdly—It is intimated that Christians should not rest satisfied in having attained to a knowledge of the first principles of the doctrine of Christ, but should go on unto perfection; not only so as to obtain satisfaction for themselves, but that they may be able to *teach others.* It is true, *all are not to be teachers by office;* but in one form or other, all should aspire to communicate the

the knowledge of Chriſt. Every Chriſtian is required to be ready to give a reaſon of the hope that is in him with meekneſs and fear: and if all the members of our churches did but poſſeſs this readineſs, beſides the advantages that would accrue to themſelves and others, there would be leſs ſcarcity than there is of able and evangelical miniſters.

The leading ſentiment which runs through the paſſage, and compriſes the whole, is, THE IMPORTANCE OF A DEEP AND INTIMATE KNOWLEDGE OF DIVINE TRUTH. To this ſubject, brethren, permit me to call your attention. In diſcourſing upon it, I ſhall firſt inquire wherein it conſiſts, and then endeavour to ſhew the importance of it.

I. *Let us inquire, what a deep and intimate knowledge of divine truth includes.*

That the oracles of God contain deep things, requires but little proof. The character of God; our own depravity; and that great myſtery of godlineſs, God manifeſt in the fleſh, &c. are deep and intereſting ſubjects. The prophets had to *ſearch* into the meaning of their own prophecies. 1 Peter i. 10.—The riches of Chriſt, with which the apoſtles were intruſted, were denominated *unſearchable*, Eph. iii. 8; and even the higheſt orders of created intelligences are deſcribed as *looking into theſe things* for their farther improvement. 1 Pet. i. 12.

It may ſeem preſuming for any perſon, in the preſent imperfect ſtate, to determine on ſubjects of ſuch magnitude; or to talk of a deep and intimate knowledge of things which ſurpaſs the comprehenſion of the moſt exalted creatures. And if theſe terms were uſed either *abſolutely*, to expreſs the real conformity of our ideas of divine things to the full extent of the things themſelves;

themſelves ; or even *comparatively*, if the compariſon reſpected ſaints on earth and ſaints in heaven, it would be preſumption. But it is only in reference to one another in the preſent ſtate, that theſe terms are intended to apply. Compared with the heavenly inhabitants, all of us are babes: even an inſpired apoſtle was no more. *When I was a child*, ſaid he, *I ſpake as a child, I underſtood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childiſh things. For now we ſee through a glaſs darkly, but then face to face: now I know in part, but then ſhall I know even as alſo I am known.* 1 Cor. xiii. 11, 12. There are ſuch degrees, however, amongſt good men in this life, as that, compared with each other, ſome may be ſaid to poſſeſs only a ſuperficial knowledge of divine truth, and others a more deep and intimate acquaintance with it.

It is the importance of the latter of theſe that I wiſh to have impreſſed upon our minds. To attain it, the following, amongſt other things, require our attention.

1. *Though we muſt not ſtop at firſt principles, yet we muſt be well grounded in them.*

No perſon can drink deeply into any ſcience without being well acquainted with its rudiments: theſe are the foundation on which the whole ſtructure reſts. The firſt principles of the oracles of God, as ſpecified by our apoſtle, are *repentance from dead works, faith towards God, the doctrine of baptiſms, and the laying on of hands, the reſurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment.* Whatever may be meant by ſome of theſe terms, whether they refer to things peculiar to Judaiſm, or to the early times of Chriſtianity; it is clear from ſcripture, and the nature of things, that others of them are expreſſive of principles, which, in every age, are of the firſt importance. Though the apoſtle ſpeaks of *leaving* them, yet he does not mean that we ſhould give them up, or

treat

treat them with indifference, but *go on unto perfection*; as a builder leaves his foundation when he raises his walls, and advances towards the completion of his building.

Repentance was the first lesson inculcated by John the baptist, and Christ, and his apostles; and that not merely on profligate sinners, but on scribes and pharisees. All that they had hitherto learned, required, as it were, to be unlearned; and all that they had done, to be undone, and utterly relinquished.

The knowledge which carnal men acquire of divine things, puffs them up: and while they think they understand great things, they know nothing as they ought to know it. All the works too, which have been wrought during a state of unregeneracy, are *dead works*: and, instead of being in any degree pleasing to God, require to be lamented with shame and self-abhorrence. Repentance is a kind of self-emptying work: it includes a renunciation, not only of those things for which our own consciences at the time condemned us, but of what we have been in the habit of reckoning wisdom and righteousness. Hence the propriety of the order in which the scriptures place it with regard to faith, *Repent and believe the gospel.* Mark i. 15. Acts ii. 38. xx. 21. 2 Tim. ii. 25. Renounce your own ways, and embrace his: *He that will be wise, must first become a fool that he may be wise.*

Faith towards God, or believing views of the being and glory of the divine character, are reckoned also amongst the first principles of the doctrines of Christ. If we have just ideas of this very important subject, we have the key to the whole system of gospel truth. He who beholds the glory of the divine holiness, will, in that glass, perceive his own polluted and perishing condition; and, when properly impressed with a sense

of

of these things, he will naturally embrace the doctrine of a Saviour, yea, and of a *great one*. Salvation, by mere grace, through the atonement of Jesus, will appear the very object of his soul's desire. And, with these principles in his heart, other scripture doctrines will appear true, interesting, and harmonious. There are but few erroneous sentiments in the Christian world, which may not be traced to a spirit of self-admiration, which is the opposite of repentance, or to false conceptions of the divine character.

To these the apostle adds, *the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment;* or the doctrine of a future state of rewards and punishments, of endless duration. These are principles, which, though they occupy almost an ultimate place in the sacred system, yet, as every other important truth respecting man proceeds upon the supposition of their truth, they may properly enough be reckoned among the first principles of the oracles of God. If these principles were given up to the infidel, the spirit of whose creed amounts to this, *Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die;* or if the latter of them were given up to the universalist, who, though he admits of a judgment to come, yet not of an *eternal* one; we should soon find the whole fabric of truth fallen to the ground.

2. *We must not content ourselves with knowing what is truth, but must be acquainted with the evidence on which it rests.*

Christians are required to be always ready to give *a reason* for the hope that is in them, with meekness and fear: and this supposes not only that every part of religion admits of a rational defence, but that it is necessary for Christians to study, that they may be able to defend it; or at least, to feel the ground on which they rest their hope.

The

The truths contained in the oracles of God, may be diſtinguiſhed into two kinds: thoſe, which approve themſelves to our ideas of wiſdom or fitneſs; and thoſe, which utterly ſurpaſs our underſtanding, but which require to be believed as matters of pure revelation. The former chiefly reſpect the counſels and works of God, which are exhibited to our underſtanding, that God in them may be made manifeſt: the latter more commonly reſpect the being and inconceivable glories of the Godhead, the reality of which we are concerned to know, but on their mode or manner are forbidden to gaze.

It is exceedingly deſirable to trace the wiſdom and harmony of evangelical truth: it is a ſource of enjoyment ſuperior, perhaps, to any thing with which we are acquainted. All the *works of God are honourable and glorious, and ſought out by all them that have pleaſure therein;* but redemption is his *great* work, wherein appears *glory to himſelf in the higheſt, and on earth peace and good will to men*: here, therefore, muſt needs be the higheſt enjoyment. Prior to the revelation of redemption, the holy angels ſhouted for joy over the works of nature; but having witneſſed the incarnation, life, death, reſurrection, and aſcenſion of Jeſus, they *deſired to look into other things*. Nothing tends more to eſtabliſh the mind, and to intereſt the heart in any truth, than a perception that it is adapted at once to expreſs the glory of the divine character, and to meet the neceſſities of guilty creatures. The more we think of truth, therefore, in this way, the more we ſhall be *rooted and grounded in it*.

But what *reaſon* have we to give for embracing thoſe doctrines, which we conſider as above reaſon, of the fitneſs of which we conſequently pretend to have no ideas. We anſwer, they are contained in the oracles of God. Nothing is more reaſonable than to give implicit credit to HIM, who cannot lie. On this ground we believe that *there are three who bear record in heaven, the*

the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghoſt; and that theſe three are one. If God had revealed nothing but what would have come within the limits of our underſtanding, he muſt have told us little or nothing about himſelf, and nothing at all of his ſelf-exiſtence, eternity, and infinity; for we have no poſitive ideas of any of theſe things. Yet the revelation of ſuch truths may be as neceſſary as thoſe which approach nearer to our comprehenſion. The latter afford food for *knowledge*; the former teach us *humility*, and furniſh matter for *faith*.

3. *We muſt learn truth immediately from the oracles of God.*

Many religious people appear to be contented with ſeeing truth in the light in which ſome great and good author has placed it: but if ever we enter into the goſpel to purpoſe, it muſt be by reading the word of God for ourſelves, and by praying and meditating upon its ſacred contents. It is *in God's light that we muſt ſee light.* By converſing with the ſacred writers, we ſhall gradually imbibe their ſentiments, and be inſenſibly aſſimilated into the ſame ſpirit.

The writings of great and good men are not to be deſpiſed any more than their preaching; only let them not be treated as oracular. The beſt of men, in this imperfect ſtate, view things *partially*; and, therefore, are in danger of laying an improper ſtreſs upon ſome parts of ſcripture truth to the neglect of other parts, of equal, and ſometimes of ſuperior, importance. Now where this is the caſe, imitation becomes dangerous. It is rarely known but that an original ſuffers in the hands of a copyiſt: if, therefore, the former be imperfect, what may be expected of the latter? We all come far ſhort of truth and righteouſneſs, let our model be ever ſo perfect; but if this be imperfect, we ſhall poſſeſs not only our own faults, but thoſe of another.

If, as miniſters, we go about to depict either the character of a bad man, or of a good man, a ſtate of unregeneracy, or a work of grace; and, inſtead of drawing from real life, only copy from ſome accounts which we have read or heard, of theſe matters, we ſhall neither convince the ſinner, nor touch the caſe of the believer: all, to ſay the leaſt, will be foreign and unintereſting.

If we adopt the principles of fallible men, without ſearching the ſcriptures for ourſelves, and inquiring whether thoſe things be ſo, or not, they will not avail us, even allowing them to be on the ſide of truth, as if we had learned them from a higher authority. Our faith, in ſuch a caſe, will ſtand in the wiſdom of man, and not in the power of God. There is a ſavour in truth when drawn from the words which the Holy Ghoſt teacheth, which is loſt, or at leaſt diminiſhed, if it paſs under the conceptions and expreſſions of men. Nor will it avail us when moſt needed; for he who receives his creed from men, may deliver it up to men again. Truth learned only at ſecond-hand will be to us what Saul's armour was to David; we ſhall be at a loſs how to uſe it in the day of trial.

4. If we would poſſeſs a great and intimate acquaintance with divine truth, *we muſt view it in its various connexions, in the great ſyſtem of redemption.*— Syſtematical divinity, or the ſtudying of truth in a ſyſtematicl form, has been, of late years, much decried. It has become almoſt general to conſider it as the mark of a contracted mind, and the grand obſtruction to free inquiry. If we imbibe a *falſe* ſyſtem, indeed, there is no doubt but it will prove injurious; if it be true in part, but very *defective*, it may impede our progreſs in divine knowledge; or if, in order to retain a ſyſtem, we torture the ſcriptures to make them accord with it, we ſhall perverſt the truth inſtead of preſerving it.

it. These are things which make against false, defective, and anti-scriptural systems of faith; but not in the least against system itself. The best criterion of a good system is its concordance with the holy scriptures. That view of things, whether we have any of us fully attained it or not, which admits the most natural meaning to be put upon every part of God's word, is the right system of religious truth. And he, whose belief consists of a number of positions arranged in such a connexion as to constitute a consistent whole, but who, from a sense of his imperfection, and a remembrance of past errors, holds himself ready to add or retrench as evidence shall require, is in a far more advantageous track for the attainment of truth, and a real enlargement of mind, than he who thinks without a system.

To be without system, is nearly the same thing as to be without principle. Whatever principles we may have, while they continue in this disorganized state, they will answer but little purpose in the religious life. Like a tumultuous assembly in the day of battle, they may exist; but it will be without order, energy, or end.

No man could decry systematical knowledge in any thing but religion, without subjecting himself to the ridicule of thinking men: a philosopher, for instance, who, instead of improving facts which had fallen under his observation, that he might discover the general laws by which they were governed; and, instead of tracing things to their first principles, and pursuing them to their just consequences, should inveigh against all general laws, all system, all connexion and dependence, and all uniform design in the variety of creation. What should we say of a *husbandman*, who refused to arrange his observations under the respective branches of business to which they naturally belonged; who had no general scheme or plan of proceeding, but left the work of every day to the day itself, without forethought, contrivance,

trivance, or design? Or what account should we make of a *merchant*, or *tradesman*, who should exclude systematical knowledge from his affairs? He is constantly employed in buying and selling, but he must have no general system whereby to conduct either the one or the other; none for the regulation of his books; none for the assortment of his articles: all must be free, lest he sink into formality, and by being in the habit of doing things in order, should contract a narrowness of mind!

But is the Bible written upon systematical principles? Does it contain a system? Or does it encourage us to form one?—By the Bible being written on systematical principles, I suppose is meant a systematical arrangement of its contents: and there is no doubt but that the contrary of this is true. But then the same might be said of the book of nature. Though the different species of animals, vegetables, minerals, &c. are capable of being arranged under their respective *genera*, and so reduced to a system; yet in their actual position in creation, they assume no such appearance. It is wisely contrived, both in nature and scripture, that the objects of each should be scattered in lovely variety: but amidst all this variety, an observant eye will perceive unity, order, arrangement, and fulness of design.

God, in all his works, has proceeded by system: there is a beautiful connexion and harmony in every thing which he has wrought. We sometimes speak of a system of nature, a system of providence, and a system of redemption; and, as smaller systems are often included in greater, the language is not improper: in reality, however, they are all but one system; one grand piece of machinery, each part of which has a dependence on the other, and altogether form one glorious whole. Now if God proceed by system, it may be expected that the scriptures, being a transcript of his mind, should contain a system:

a ſyſtem; and if we would ſtudy them to purpoſe, it muſt be ſo as to diſcover what that ſyſtem is.

I never recollect to have heard any objection to ſyſtematical divinity with regard to *practice*. Let a Chriſtian, utterly unacquainted with human writings, take his Bible with a view to learn the mind of God upon any given ſubject, ſuppoſe it be *the duty of parents*, he will naturally collect all the paſſages in the ſacred writings which relate to that ſubject, arrange them in order, and from the whole, thus taken together, regulate his conduct. For this, no one would think of blaming him: yet this will be actually ſyſtematical.

Let him do the ſame with reſpect to every other duty, and he will be in poſſeſſion of a body or ſyſtem of practical divinity. And why ſhould he ſtop here; why not collect the mind of God from the whole of ſcripture taken together, upon things to be believed, as well as things to be performed?

If the apoſtles had not conſidered divine truth in a ſyſtematical form, how came the writer of this epiſtle to ſpeak of *the firſt principles of the oracles of God?* This language ſuppoſes, as before obſerved, a ſcheme or ſyſtem of faith: and if ſuch a form of conſidering truth were diſadvantageous to Chriſtians, how came he to cenſure the Hebrews for their want of progreſs in it? In the epiſtle to the Romans, chap. xii. 6, we read of the *proportion* or *analogy of faith*, which ſuppoſes that the goſpel is one proportionate or conſiſtent whole.

Could a ſyſtem of divinity be written, in which every ſacred truth or duty ſhould have a place aſſigned it, and ſuch a place, both as to order and importance, as properly belonged to it, not invading the province of other truths or duties, but, on the contrary, ſubſerving them, and itſelf appearing to the greateſt advantage amongſt

them; such a performance would answer to what the apostle means by *the proportion of faith*. But can we expect a work answering to this description from an uninspired pen?—Perhaps not: the materials for such a model, however, exist in the holy scriptures, and though we cannot collect and arrange them to perfection, let us, as in all other things, *press towards the mark*.

Let that system of religion, which we embrace, be but, in the main, the right one, and so far from contracting the mind, it is easy to perceive that it will abundantly enlarge it. For example, let the fact of Joseph's being sold into Egypt be viewed without its connexion with God's designs, and it will appear a melancholy instance of human depravity; we shall see nothing very remarkable in it; and it will seem calculated only to afford a disgusting picture of family jealousies and intrigues, enough to break the heart of an aged parent. But let the same fact be viewed systematically, as a link in a chain, or as a part of a whole, and it will assume a very different appearance. Thus viewed, it is an event pregnant with glory. He must needs go down into Egypt that much people might be preserved alive; that Jacob's family might follow him; that they might there be preserved, for a season, till, in due time, having become a great nation, they should be led forth with a high hand; that they might be placed in Canaan, and might set up the worship of the true God; that the Messiah might be born among them; and that his kingdom might be extended over the whole earth. Without a system, the patriarch reflected, *All these things are against me:* but with a system, or rather with only the discovery of a very small part of it, he exclaimed, *It is enough: Joseph, my son, is yet alive: I will go down, and see him before I die.*

In addition to this event in providence, let us offer a few examples on matters of doctrine.

Would

Would you contemplate the great *evil of sin*, you must view it in its connexions, tendencies, and consequences. For a poor finite creature, whose life is but a vapour, to gratify a vicious inclination, may appear a trifle: but when its tendencies and mischievous consequences are taken into the account, it wears a different aspect. Jeroboam *said in his heart, If this people go up to sacrifice at Jerusalem, then shall the kingdom return unto David.* Hence he set up idolatry; and hence the nation was corrupted more and more, till at length it was given up to utter destruction. Considering ourselves as links in the great chain of moral government, every transgression is of vast importance, because it affects the whole system. If the government of God be once violated, an example is set, which, if followed, would ruin the universe.

Farther, if we contemplate *the death of Christ* without any relation to system, we shall only see a suffering person at Jerusalem, and feel that pity and disgust which is ordinarily excited by injustice and cruelty. But let us view it as connected with the moral government of God; as a glorious expedient to secure its honours; *a propitiation* wherein *God declared his righteousness for the remission of sins*, Rom. iii. 25, and we shall have a new set of feelings. While the apostles continued to view this event unconnectedly, their minds were contracted, and sorrow filled their hearts; but when their eyes were opened to see it in its connexions and consequences, their sorrow was turned into joy. Those very persons who, but a few weeks before, could not bear to think of their Lord's departure, after they had witnessed his ascension to glory, *returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and continued daily in the temple, praising and blessing God.* Luke xxiv. 52, 53.

Once more, if we view the doctrine of *election* as unconnected with other things, it may appear to us to be a kind

a kind of fondneſs without reaſon or wiſdom. A charge of caprice would hereby be brought againſt the Almighty; and profeſſors, like the carnal Jews, on account of the diſtinguiſhing favours conferred on their nation, would be foſtered in ſelf-conceit. But if it be conſidered in connexion with the great ſyſtem of religious truth, it will appear in a very different light. It will repreſent the Divine Being in his true character; not as acting without deſign, and ſubjecting himſelf to endleſs diſappointments; but as accompliſhing all his works in purſuance of an eternal purpoſe. And as ſalvation, from firſt to laſt, is of mere grace, and every ſon and daughter of Adam is abſolutely at the divine diſcretion, it tends powerfully to impreſs this idea both upon ſaints and ſinners. While it leads the former to acknowledge, that by the grace of God they are what they are, it teaches the latter to relinquiſh their vain hopes, and to fall into the arms of ſovereign mercy.

As the righteouſneſs of God's elect is not the ground of their election, ſo neither is their felicity its ultimate end. God righteouſly hides the things of the goſpel from the wiſe and prudent, and reveals them unto babes, becauſe *ſo it ſeemeth good in his ſight:* it tends moſt to diſplay the glory of his character, and to promote the general good of creation. Theſe things, if properly conſidered, are of a humbling tendency.

If the Jews had conſidered that they were not choſen, or put in poſſeſſion of the good land, *for their righteouſneſs, or for the uprightneſs of their hearts;* and that though it was an inſtance of great love to them, yet it was not ultimately for their ſake, or to accompliſh their happineſs, but that God *might fulfil his covenant with Abraham, Iſaac, and Jacob*, Deut. ix. 5, in whom, and in whoſe ſeed *all nations of the earth were to be bleſſed*; and if they had conſidered the ſalvation of the world as the end of their national exiſtence, and themſelves as *God's*

inſtru-

witneſſes, till the times of reformation; inſtead of valuing themſelves, and deſpiſing other nations, they would have reckoned themſelves *their ſervants for Jehovah's ſake.*

In ſhort, by conſidering principles in their various connexions, far *greater advances will be made in divine knowledge than by any other means.* The diſcovery of one important truth will lead on to a hundred more. Let a Chriſtian but realize, for example, the glory of the Divine Character as the moral Governor of the world; and he will, at once, perceive the equity and goodneſs of the moral law, which requires us to love him with all the heart. In this glaſs he will ſee his own depravity: and poſſeſſed of theſe views, the grace of the goſpel will appear to him to be grace indeed. Every bleſſing it contains will be endearing; and the medium through which all is conveyed, ſuperlatively precious. A train of thought like this has frequently proved more intereſting than the labours of thoſe, who, having diſcovered a vein of ſilver or gold, dig deeply into the bowels of the enriching mine.

Having conſidered a few of the means neceſſary for the attainment of a deep and intimate knowledge of truth: I ſhall

II. Attempt to eſtabliſh the IMPORTANCE *of ſuch a knowledge.*

As the powers of created beings are limited, and no one can expect to underſtand every thing, it is the province of wiſdom to ſelect thoſe kinds of knowledge as the objects of our purſuit, which are moſt valuable, and of the greateſt utility. There are ſome depths, of which it is our honour and felicity to be ignorant; Rev. ii. 24; and even in things which are lawful, we may, in numberleſs inſtances, very well be excuſed, if not

not in wholly neglecting, yet in poſſeſſing only a general acquaintance with them. But divine truth requires not only to be known, but well known: it is not only neceſſary that we have ſentiments, and right ſentiments, but that we enter deeply into them. Every thing pertaining to God is great, and requires all our powers. In whatever we indulge indifference, there is no room for it here: God requires not only *all our heart*, but all our *mind and ſtrength*.

The importance of a deep and intimate acquaintance with divine truth, will more particularly appear from the following conſiderations:

1. A neglect of God's word is repreſented as *a heinous ſin*: but we ſhall not be able to eſcape this ſin, if we content ourſelves with a ſuperficial acquaintance with truth. Revelation, in every ſtage, demands our ſerious attention; but the revelation of eternal life, through Jeſus Chriſt, requires attention in the higheſt degree. This is that *great ſalvation*, which we are charged not to neglect: Heb. ii. 3. The dignity of its author, its ſublime and intereſting nature, with the accumulated evidence, which God hath condeſcended to afford us of its divine original, combine to require of us the moſt careful and cordial examination into its contents. A neglect of this is either total or partial: the former would denominate us unbelievers, and expoſe us to utter deſtruction: the latter, though it may exiſt in ſincere Chriſtians, is nevertheleſs a ſin, and a ſin more than a little offenſive to the God of truth.

To be contented with a ſuperficial acquaintance with divine things, implies *diſreſpect to* HIM *who has revealed them*. A letter from a diſtant friend, to whom we are cordially attached, is viewed and reviewed, and every ſentence of it carefully inſpected, and on many occaſions committed to memory. Why ſhould not the

the word of God be productive of the same effects? Indeed it is: for in proportion as we love God, his word will *dwell richly in us.* It will be our bosom companion, to which we shall have recourse on every occasion; especially in seasons of leisure, when the mind, like a spring from which a pressure is removed, rises to its natural position. Hence the following language, *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might: and these words which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart, and thou shalt teach them diligently to thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.* Deut. vi. 5, 6, 7.

To be contented with a superficial acquaintance with divine things, implies also a *want of affection to the things themselves.* A will, or testament, in which we were deeply interested, would be procured with eagerness, and read with avidity; and if any difficulty remained as to the meaning of a particular passage, we should have no rest till by some means or other we had obtained a solution of it. I need not apply this remark. Nothing is more evident, than that whatever is uppermost in our affections, will form the grand current of our thoughts. And where our thoughts are directed to a subject with intenseness and perseverance, it will become familiar to us; and unless it be owing to the want of natural capacity, or other necessary means, we shall, of course, enter deeply into it.

I have been much struck with the ardent affection which David discovered to the holy scriptures, and every part of their sacred contents. The whole cxix. Psalm is a continued encomium upon them. There we have such language as the following: *O, how I love thy law. My soul breaketh for the longing that it hath*

hath unto thy judgments at all times. Thy statutes have been my song in the house of my pilgrimage. The law of thy mouth is better to me than thousands of gold and silver. Now, all the scriptures which were then extant, amounted to little more than the writings of Moses. What additions have we since enjoyed!—Besides the Book of Psalms, and the Prophecies which followed, we have the whole New Testament—*full of grace and truth*—wherein the invisible God hath, as it were, rendered himself visible.—HIM, *whom no man hath seen at any time, the only begotten* SON, *who dwelt in his bosom, hath declared.* John i. 17, 18.—How is it that such a price should be in our hands to get wisdom, and yet that we should have so little heart for it.

2. The word of God is represented as *a mean of sanctification:* but no effect of this kind can be produced beyond the degree in which we imbibe it. One great object of our Lord's intercession with the Father on our behalf was, *that we might be sanctified through the truth,* even *by his word, which is truth.* The gospel is continually held up, not only as *a doctrine according to godliness,* but as having a powerful influence in producing it. *It teacheth us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world. It worketh effectually in those who believe.* It was by the doctrine of the Cross that the world became crucified to the Apostle, and he unto the world! So universal and so manifest were the effects of divine truth upon the practice of the primitive Christians, that the sacred writers could appeal to fact on their behalf, that they, and they only were successful combatants against the world's temptations: —*Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?* John xvii. 17. Tit. ii. 12. 1 Thess. ii. 13. Gal. vi. 14. 1 John v. 4, 5.

Now, in order that the gospel may be productive of

of these effects, it is necessary that it be understood. —Without this, how should it interest or affect the heart? We must *believe the truth*, ere it will work effectually: we must *know* it, or it will not make us free. That we may serve God acceptably, and with godly fear, we must have *grace*; and grace is multiplied *through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord.*

Knowledge and affection have a mutual influence on each other. That the love of truth will prompt us to labour after a more perfect acquaintance with its contents, has been already observed: and that such an acquaintance will promote an increasing love of truth in return, is equally evident. We cannot love an unknown gospel any more than an unknown God. Affection is fed by knowledge, being thereby furnished with grounds or reasons for its operations. By the expansion of the mind, the heart is supplied with objects which fill it with delight. It is thus that it becomes enlarged, and that we feel ourselves sweetly induced to *run in the way of the divine commandments.*

How was it that the apostle became dead to the world, by the cross of Christ? I suppose on much the same principle, that the light of the stars is eclipsed by that of the sun; or that a man having drunk old wine, ceases to desire new, for he saith, the old is better. It is by drinking deeply into religion, that we become disaffected to carnal objects.

3. The word of God is represented as the *great source of Christian enjoyment*: but no effect of this kind can be produced any farther than we imbibe the truth. The same way in which divine truth operates as a medium of sanctification, it becomes a source of enjoyment; namely, by interesting and affecting the heart. That which, by its superior lustre, eclipses the pleasures of sense, and crucifies us to the world, at the same time

kindles a joy in the heart, which is unspeakable and full of glory. The habitual joy, which was possessed by the Apostles and primitive Christians, chiefly arose from a knowledge and belief of the gospel. It was *the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord* that induced the Apostle to *count all things but loss and dung.* Phil. iii. 8. Those in whom *the word of Christ dwelt richly, in all wisdom*, were supposed to be so enlivened by it, that it became natural to them to *teach and admonish one another in psalms and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing with grace in their hearts to the Lord.* Col. iii. 16. The object for which the apostle *bowed his knees to the Father of glory*, in behalf of the Ephesians, was, that by means of a *comprehensive knowledge of the breadth, and length, and depth, and height of the* redeeming *love of Christ, they might be filled with all the fulness of God.* Ephes. iii. 18, 19. The wells of salvation are deep; and he that lacketh knowledge is as one that hath nothing to draw with.

The prejudice of many Christians against doctrinal preaching, as being, in their esteem, *dry and uninteresting;* and the preference which is given to that which is more descriptive of their feelings, and which is therefore termed *experimental*, is worthy of attention. If the doctrine which we preach be not the unadulterated gospel of Christ, it will indeed be dry; or, if instead of entering into the spirit of truth, we are employed in a fruitless discussion of terms, or things on which the scriptures forbear to decide, it must needs be uninteresting, and even disgusting to a holy mind. But if the pure gospel of Jesus, well understood by the preacher, and communicated from the fulness of his heart, do not interest us, there must be some lamentable disorder in the state of our minds. If the manna that comes down from heaven be loathed, it is a sign that things are not with us as they ought to be. The doctrine of Moses, and surely much more that of Jesus,

ſus, *dropped as the rain, and diſtilled as the dew upon the tender herb.*

Chriſtian *experience* (or what is generally underſtood by that term, the painful and pleaſurable feelings of good men) will be found, if genuine, to ariſe from the influence of truth upon the mind. If we be ſtrangers to the glory of God's moral character, and the great evil of ſin, we ſhall be ſtrangers to all the feelings of godly ſorrow on account of it. And what ground is there for *joy and peace*, but *in believing?* Take away the Deity and atonement of Chriſt, and they are annihilated. To this may be added, give up the doctrines of the reſurrection and a future life, and what becomes of hope? From theſe inſtances, out of many others, you will eaſily perceive, that doctrinal and experimental preaching are not ſo remote from each other as ſome perſons have imagined; and that to extol the latter at the expenſe of the former, is to act like him who wiſhes the fountain to be deſtroyed becauſe he prefers the ſtream.

4. It is a great object in the Chriſtian life, according to our capacities and opportunities, to diffuſe the light of the goſpel around us: but we cannot communicate any thing beyond the degree in which we poſſeſs it. The communication of goſpel truth is not confined to miniſters. Every Chriſtian moves in a ſphere of ſome extent; and is expected ſo to occupy it, as to embrace every occaſion which may offer to make known the way of eternal life to thoſe about him. The primitive churches were ſchools of heavenly inſtruction, as the words of the text, to go no farther, plainly intimate; and the apoſtle reproves ſome of their members for having made no greater proficiency. Though it would be vain for every one to aſpire at being a public teacher of Chriſtianity, yet, as hath been already obſerved, every one ſhould be concerned that he

he may be able to *give a reason for the hope that is in him*, and to teach the good and the right way to those with whom he is immediately connected. The duties of a parent, and a master, include in them the instruction of those who are committed to their care. Many opportunities arise, in which Christians might communicate the knowledge of Christ to their neighbours; those in a state of servitude to their fellow-servants; and, provided it were done on proper occasions, and, according to the apostolic rule, *in meekness and fear*, persons in inferior stations might suggest a useful hint even to their superiors.

When the family of Elimelech went to sojourn in Moab, they carried their religion with them; so recommended the God of Israel to those with whom they formed connexions, that one of them was induced to leave her country, her kindred, and her gods, and to put her trust under the shadow of his wings. Ruth i. And even a *little maid* of the land of Israel, who had been carried captive into Syria, by speaking to her mistress, on a favourable opportunity, was instrumental in her master's being healed of his leprosy, and in his being brought to acknowledge and adore the true God. 2 Kings v. Such cases are recorded to encourage us to communicate the good knowledge of God on all proper occasions: but, in order to do this, we must first possess it, and that in a greater degree than merely to denominate us Christians.

Perhaps one of the most favourable opportunities for Christians to suggest important truth to their neighbours and connexions, is when any of them are under a threatening affliction. To visit them at such a time would be kindly taken: even the worst of characters are commonly accessible when they apprehend eternity to be drawing nigh. You may now freely converse and pray with them; and if your circumstances will admit,

admit, and theirs require it, a communication of your worldly substance would convince them of your good will, give weight to your instructions, and correspond with the conduct of HIM, who went about doing good to the bodies and souls of men. But such a practice requires an intimate acquaintance with divine truth. It is an important matter to converse with men, who are just on the borders of an eternal world: it requires not only tenderness, faithfulness, and prudence; but an ability to expose those false refuges, and detect those delusive hopes, to which, at such seasons, they are generally disposed to fly; and to direct them to the *only name under heaven, given amongst men, whereby they must be saved.**

5. In time of apostacy from the truth, Christians are exhorted to be stedfast: 2 Pet. iii. 17; but a stedfast adherence to truth, requires that we be rooted and grounded in it. The wisdom of God sees meet, in order to prove mankind, and especially his professing people, to suffer other gospels, besides the true one, to obtain footing amongst us. I am aware that it has become customary, in these times, to make a jest of *heresy*, and to deride, as illiberal, narrow-minded bigots, all those who consider any religious sentiments as endangering the salvation of men. But I hope we shall not, on this account, be deterred from such an attachment to truth as the scriptures encourage. It is granted that the term *heresy* has been wretchedly abused; and that

* Of the numerous liberal institutions which, at this time, adorn the metropolis, none appear to me more deserving of encouragement than those societies which have lately been formed for *visiting, relieving, and conversing with the afflicted poor.* If they continue to be conducted with propriety; if, in particular, suitable persons are selected as visitors I hope they will prove a blessing of magnitude. May God Almighty bless those young people who are thus employed, and may they never want support from a benevolent public.

that it becomes Christians to beware of applying it to every departure from even truth itself: yet there is such a thing in being. There were heresies in the apostles' times; and it was predicted that there should, in after times, be persons who would *bring in* even *damnable heresies*. 2 Pet. ii. 1. Let no one be startled at the use of these terms: I did not coin them; and am not accountable for them: but seeing they occupy a place in the holy scriptures, I think myself concerned to understand them. Whatever difficulty there may be in ascertaining their precise object, they undoubtedly teach us that men's souls may be destroyed by mental, as well as by sensual, lusts; even the souls of professing Christians; for the words are not intended to describe open infidels, but such as should bear the Christian name, yea, and who should be teachers of Christianity.

The circulation of doctrines pleasing to corrupt nature will prove men to be what they are. They are the fan in Christ's hand, by which he will thoroughly purge his floor. That light-minded professors of religion should be carried away with them, is no more a matter of surprise than that the chaff should be carried away by the wind: but how is it that those, of whom we would hope better things, are often shaken?

If a minister, in almost any of our congregations, should relinquish truth, and fall into the grossest errors; unless he has so conducted himself as to have gained little or no esteem amongst the people, he is seldom known to go off alone: sometimes half a congregation, and sometimes more, have been known to follow him, or at least to be greatly unhinged for a considerable time. If a writer start up in almost any connexion, let his performance be ever so weak or extravagant; yet, if he possess but a sufficient quantity of overbearing assurance, he will have his admirers; and some serious people will be in danger of being turned aside.

How

How are these things to be accounted for? I conceive the principal reason is, that Christians content themselves with a superficial knowledge of divine things. Great numbers, from a dislike to controversy, will never take any pains to understand the difference between one set of religious principles and another. They have no desire to enable themselves to distinguish between true and false reasonings.—They are too apt to take it for granted, that what they have imbibed is truth, and that nothing can be advanced with the least colour of reason for the contrary: when, therefore, an argument appears with a little plausibility on its face, it has only to obtain a reading, or a hearing, and their assent is gained. Brethren, let shame, if nothing else, provoke us, that we *henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine.* Ephes. iv. 14. Let us be concerned, not obstinately to adhere to our present sentiments, be they what they may, but to know the mind of God in his word; and knowing it, let us stedfastly adhere to it.

The present age seems to be an age of trial. Not only is the gospel corrupted by those who bear the Christian name; but, of late, you well know, it has been openly assailed. The most direct and daring opposition has been made to the very name of Christianity. I am not going to alarm you with any idea that *the church is in danger*: no, my brethren, the church, of which we, I trust, are members, and of which Christ, and Christ alone, is head, is not in danger: it is built upon a rock, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. Neither are my apprehensions excited concerning those who are true members of the church: these trying blasts, though they may affect them for a season, will ultimately cause them to take deeper root. Nevertheless, it becomes us to feel for the souls of men, especially for the rising generation; and to warn even good men that they be not unarmed in the evil day.

The

The human heart has ever been averſe to the goſpel of Chriſt; but the turn or temper of the preſent age is peculiarly in favour of infidelity. In much the ſame manner as, in former ages, men were violently attached to a perſecuting ſuperſtition, they are now verging to the oppoſite extreme, and are in danger of throwing off all religion. Our temptations, and thoſe which will attend our poſterity after us, are likely, therefore, to be widely different from what they have hitherto been. Hitherto nominal Chriſtianity has been no reproach; but reproach has attached itſelf to the other ſide. The caſe, in this reſpect, may ſoon be altered. Men grow bold in avowing their contempt of Chriſtianity; and many among the diſſipated part of the youth are following their example. Now, if characters of this deſcription ſhould ſpring up in ſufficient numbers, not only to keep each other in countenance, but to turn the tide of reproach againſt Chriſtians, as a company of wrong-headed enthuſiaſts, we ſhall ſoon ſee which ſide the maſs of mankind will take. Their characters being looſe and profligate, they have long felt themſelves condemned by the goſpel; and this is a matter that does not ſit very eaſy upon them.—Nothing has kept them from rejecting it before now, but the diſgrace that would follow upon their becoming open infidels: whenever, therefore, this diſgrace ſhall be removed, we may expect them to go off in great companies. The ſlighteſt obſervation of human nature muſt convince us, that the greater part of mankind, even in religious matters, are governed by faſhion: they go with *the courſe of this world*. So great an influence has the tide of public opinion upon them, that even where it is not altogether agreeable to their own views and inclinations, they are, nevertheleſs, frequently carried away by it: but if it be thus where public opinion and private inclination are at variance, it muſt, of courſe, be much more ſo in thoſe caſes wherein they are agreed. This will be like a union of the wind and

tide:

tide : the veſſel that is carried along by ſuch a joint influence, can ſcarcely have any thing left to impede its progreſs.

The great influence, which a certain popular pamphlet has had upon men's minds, is not ſo much owing to the work itſelf, though it poſſeſſes all the agreeableneſs to a depraved heart, which wit and malignity can give it, as to the bias of the preſent generation in favour of the principles which it contains. Of this the author himſelf ſeems to have been ſufficiently aware, by the title which he has thought proper to give his performance.*

It is not unlikely that almoſt all our religious controverſies will ſoon be reduced to one, upon which the great body of men will divide. Is Chriſtianity true or falſe? Is there a God? Is there a heaven and a hell? Or is it all a fiction? Agitated by theſe important queſtions, the greater part of the inhabitants of Europe, and perhaps of America, including our own poſterity, may rank either as real Chriſtians, or as open Infidels.

What ſhall we ſay to theſe things? Ought they to depreſs us? We ought, undoubtedly, to feel for the welfare of men's ſouls, and cannot but feel for thoſe who are more intimately connected with us: but upon any other principle, I know not that they ought to have any ſuch effect upon us. God is upon his throne: his church is upon a rock: whatever *hour of temptation may be coming upon the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth, thoſe who hold faſt the word of his patience will be kept through it:* Rev. iii. 10. *All things are working together for good to them that love God.* With theſe views, Chriſtians may rejoice, and rejoice always.

While

* The Age of Reaſon.

While we rejoice, however, we must rejoice with trembling; and while we confide in God, must be diffident of ourselves. Let us not presume on our own firmness, but *put on the whole armour of God, that we may withstand in the evil day.* The first thing required in this divine accoutrement is, that *our loins be girt about with truth*, Ephes. vi. 14; but truth will not prove as a girdle to our loins in the day of battle, except we be deeply and intimately acquainted with it.

O ye sons and daughters of carelessness, who are called Christians, but have no root in yourselves, what aspect do these things wear towards you? The time seems drawing nigh that will prove you to be what you are! Hitherto there has been an *outer court* for you, and you have worshipped in it. You have long had a form of godliness, but have been without the power. You have ranked with the friends of truth, but have never received it in love, that you might be saved. You have kept up the profession of something that has been called Christianity, without feeling yourselves under any necessity to proceed farther: but now your outer court will probably be taken away, and you will feel yourselves impelled, as it were, either to come in and be Christians in reality, or to go out and take your portion with the unbelieving and the abominable.

In the Press of MANNING & LORING,

A VIEW OF RELIGIONS,

In Two Parts.

Part I. Containing an alphabetical Compedium of the various religious Denominations, which have appeared in the World, from the beginning of the Christian Era to the present Day.

Part II. Containing a brief Account of the different Schemes of Religion now embraced among Mankind.

The whole collected from the most approved Authors, ancient and modern.

By HANNAH ADAMS.

The Third Edition, with large Additions.

"Prove all things, hold fast that which is good."——Apostle PAUL.

——✝——

Also in the Press,

A COMPENDIOUS

MEDICAL DICTIONARY:

Containing an Explanation of the Terms in *Anatomy*, *Physiology*, *Surgery*, *Materia Medica*, *Chemistry*, and *Practice of Physic*. Collected from the most approved Authors.

By R. HOOPER, M. D.

Of Pembroke College, Oxford; Fellow of the Linnæan and London Medical Societies.

The Author's Design is expressed in

THE PREFACE.

"THE object of the present Medical portable Dictionary is to deliver, in a concise and perspicuous manner, the explanation, &c. of all the terms used in the whole science of medicine.

"Many excellent works have already appeared on the same subject; but their magnitude and diffuseness are great objections to their general utility. A work, therefore, concentrating their advantages without their inconvenience, it is hoped, will be acceptable to medical students."

AUGUST, 1801.

☞ *The above Works will be published in a few weeks.*

BOOKS,

For Sale at MANNING & LORING's Bookstore,
No. 2, *Cornhill*, BOSTON.

THE Gospel its own Witness: or, The Holy Nature and Divine Harmony of the Christian Religion, contrasted with the Immorality and Absurdity of Deism. By ANDREW FULLER.

Motto—"Laying his hand on his Bible, he would say, 'There is true Philosophy. This is the wisdom that speaks to the heart. A bad life is the only grand objection to this Book."——*Earl of Rochester.*

To which is annexed, A Summary of the principal Evidences for the Truth and Divine Origin of the Christian Revelation. Designed chiefly for the use of Young Persons. By BIELBY, Lord Bishop of London.

[*Price, bound together, One Dollar.*

Observations on the Conversion and Apostleship of St. Paul: being an argumentative and rational Defence of the Christian Revelation; deduced from the Circumstances of St. Paul before his Conversion, and the Effects which followed it, as exemplified in his Life, and in the Doctrines which he preached. In a letter to GILBERT WEST, Esq. By LORD GEORGE LYTTLETON.

The Author of the celebrated Work, entitled, Pursuits of Literature, gives the following recommendation of this valuable Tract:——"Lord Lyttleton has discussed the most illustrious instance of the Conversion to this [the Christian] religion, in the person of St. Paul, a man of the highest natural talents, and profoundest reasoning and erudition; and he has accompanied the whole with remarks of weight and dignity on the general subject of Revelation."

Wilberforce's Practical View of the prevailing Religious System of Professed Christians, in the higher and middle Classes, contrasted with Real Christianity.

Watts's Miscellaneous Thoughts, in Verse and Prose.

Brown's Dictionary of the Bible, containing an Historical Account of the Persons; a Geographical and Historical Account of the Places; a literal, critical, and systematical Description of other objects, whether natural, artificial, civil, religious or military; and the

Explication of the appellative terms, mentioned in the writings of the Old and New Teſtament.

Butterworth's Concordance to the Holy Scriptures.

Newton on the Prophecies.

Orton's Diſcourſes to the Aged.

Fleetwood's Life of Chriſt; together with the Lives and Sufferings of the Apoſtles.

Campbell on Miracles.

Memoirs of Mrs. Sarah Oſborn, late of Newport, Rhode-Iſland. By the Rev. Dr. Hopkins.

Owen on the Hebrews.

Newton's Works in nine volumes.

Blair's Sermons.

Booth's Reign of Grace, from its Riſe to its Conſummation.

Burton's Lectures on Female Education and Manners.

Butler's Analogy of Religion, Natural and Revealed, to the Conſtitution and Courſe of Nature.

Boſton's Human Nature in its Fourfold State.

Book of Martyrs, with Plates.

Bogatzky's Golden Treaſury for the Children of God: conſiſting of ſelect Texts of the Bible, with Practical Obſervations, in Proſe and Verſe, for every day in the year.

Calvary; or the Death of Chriſt, a Poem, by Richard Cumberland.

Coles' Diſcourſe on the Sovereignty of God.

Doddridge's Riſe and Progreſs of Religion in the Soul, illuſtrated in a courſe of ſerious and practical Addreſſes, ſuited to perſons of every character and circumſtance.

New Edition of Sacred Dramas, chiefly intended for Young Perſons: The ſubjects taken from the Bible. To which are added, Reflections of King Hezekiah; Senſibility, a poem; and Search after Happineſs.

By HANNAH MORE.

Motto—"All the Books of the Bible are either moſt admirable and exalted pieces of Poetry, or are the beſt materials in the world for it." COWLEY.

Doddridge's Ten Sermons on Regeneration.

Davies' Sermons on important Subjects.

Edwards on Religious Affections.

Edwards' History of Redemption, with Notes, Historical, Critical, and Theological.

Edwards on the Millennium.

Fuller's Letters, in which the Calviniſtic and Socinian Syſtems are examined and compared as to their moral tendency.

Grove, on the Nature and Deſign of the Lord's Supper.

Goſpel Sonnets, by Erſkine.

Hunter's Sacred Biography; to which is added, the Hiſtory of Deborah, Ruth, and Hannah.

Hopkins's Syſtem of Divinity.

Hervey's Meditations and Contemplations; containing his Meditations among the Tombs, Reflections on a Flower Garden, Deſcant on Creation, Contemplations on Night, on the Starry Heavens, a Winter Piece, &c. &c.

Horne's Commentary on the Book of Pſalms.

Jenks's Prayers and Offices of Devotion for Families and particular Perſons.

Jenyns' Inquiry into the Nature and Origin of Evil.

———View of the Internal Evidence of the Chriſtian Religion.

Life of Preſident Stiles, by the Rev. Abiel Holmes, with a Portrait.

Lives of Drs. Watts and Doddridge.

M'Ewen on the Types, Figures and Allegories of the Old Teſtament.

Maſon on Self Knowledge, ſhewing the Nature and Benefit of that important Science, and the way to attain it.

Orton's Letters to a young Clergyman.

Paley's View of the Evidences of Chriſtianity.

Pike and Hayward's Religious Caſes of Conſcience, anſwered in an evangelical manner; to which is added

the Spiritual Companion; or, the Profeſſing Chriſtian tried at the bar of God's Word.

Poor Man's Help, and Young Man's Guide, (by Burkitt) containing Doctrinal Inſtructions; Practical Directions; Forms of Prayer, Hymns, &c. &c.

Pilgrim's Progreſs (by Bunyan) from this world to that which is to come, delivered under the ſimilitude of a Dream; with the Life of the Author.

Scougal's Life of God in the Soul of Man, with Rules for a Holy Life.

Thomſon's Seaſons.

Watts's Lyric Poems, ſacred to Devotion and Piety; Virtue, Honour and Friendſhip; the Memory of the Dead.

Watts's Miſcellaneous Thoughts in Proſe and Verſe, on Natural, Moral and Divine Subjects.

Watts's Logic; or, the right Uſe of Reaſon in the Inquiry after Truth.

Watts on the Improvement of the Mind; being a ſupplement to the Art of Logic.

Williſon's Afflicted Man's Companion; or, a Directory for Perſons and Families, afflicted with Sickneſs, or any other Diſtreſs.

Williſon's Sacramental Meditations and Advices, grounded upon Scripture Texts, proper for communicants, with a ſhort Chriſtian Directory, &c.

Whitefield's Ten Sermons on various important ſubjects.

Whitefield's Eighteen Sermons on various important ſubjects.

Young's (Dr.) Night Thoughts, on Life, Death and Immortality; with the Life of the Author, &c.

Zimmermann on Solitude, with reſpect to its influence upon the Mind and Heart.